THE WORKS OF Mr. *Thomas Emlyn.*

VOLUME III.

CONTAINING,

SERMONS

ON THE

FOLLOWING SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Moral duties to be prefer'd before poſitive ones.
The deſign of divine patience is to give ſpace for repentance.
Practical immorality worſe than ſpeculative infidelity.
True happineſs not to be found in any earthly enjoyment.
Holy men from all quarters of the world ſhall meet in heaven.
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The nature, end, and deſign of the Lord's ſupper.
Faith and patience the way to inherit the promiſes.
Chriſt entred into heaven as our forerunner, and as our high-prieſt.
The ſuppreſſion of public vice an honourable employment.
Funeral conſolations.

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ERRATA.

Pag. 14. l. 16. for *complaint* read *compliment.*
Pag. 100. l. 15. before *There* place V.
Pag. 212. l. 16. for *their* read *his.*

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SERMON I.

Moral duties to be prefer'd before poſitive ones.

MATTHEW xxiii. ver. 23.

Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, aniſe and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone.

THAT our Lord Jeſus might advance truth and holineſs in that generation, he found it neceſſary to contend zealouſly againſt the Scribes and Phariſees; the one is a name of office denoting the interpreters of the law, the other of a ſect, they might both happen to meet in the ſame

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perſon; however, we find both ſorts frequently joined together, being the ruling clergy of that age, who not only moſt violently oppoſed our Lord, but indeed had wofully corrupted the people by their erroneous gloſſes upon the law; they expounded away the life and beauty of the commandments, leaving only the huſk and ſhell, and inſtead of attending to the true and ſubſtantial holineſs of the law, the moral part of it, they ſpent their zeal upon the little appendices of ſmall conſideration; and upon this trifling zeal had built themſelves a great reputation of ſanctity.

OUR bleſſed Lord on all occaſions detects their hypocriſy, and denounces againſt them a wo of miſery, while the people applauded them as the only happy ſaints. In this verſe he exhibits a charge of hypocriſy againſt them, which he proves from the partiality and irregularity of their obedience; ſome precepts of leſſer uſe and of dubious interpretation they earneſtly recommended and nicely practiſed, others of more intrinſic worth they paſſed ſlightly over; they enlarged the ceremonial and contracted the moral part of the law, they were zealous in dubious, and indifferent in the unqueſtionable matters of duty

duty, and therefore did not deal honeſtly with the law, but made their obedience to be a gratification of their carnal hearts, and religion a ſervant to their luſts. SERM. I.

THE caſe was thus; God had commanded *Deut.* xiv. 23. that every third year they ſhould bring forth all the tithe of the increaſe of their lands for the Levites and the poor; from hence a queſtion aroſe how far this ſhould extend: ſome thought it only reſpected the fruits of the field and vineyard, or ſuch things as were of valuable uſe for ſuſtenance, and that the precept was not to be preſſed ſo rigorouſly as to take in every little trifling herb of the garden, ſuch as mint and rue, which were of little or no ſignificance to the ſupport of the indigent, and might be had at pleaſure for aſking; the tithing whereof was not only more troubleſome than it was worth, but was very difficult ſo to be performed, that they might be ſure they had gone through all, and had not miſſed ſome little herb or ſprout, that they might ſit down eaſy without any ſcruple remaining in their mind.

BUT theſe rigid interpreters of the law, inſtead of ſuch a mild and equitable expoſition, would needs ſhow their religious zeal by

SERM. I. taking it in the ſevereſt ſenſe; they were nice and ſcrupulous, buſy and vehement about theſe little and dubious points, boaſting loudly of their eminent piety on this account, *Luke* xviii. 12. *I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs*; while yet they ſhewed no conſcience towards men in matters of a thouſand times greater importance; took no ſuch care to obſerve mercy, truth or juſtice in their dealings; they had *ſo much* conſcience as by no means to wrong the widow of a ſprig of mint or rue, but *ſo little* as to devour widows houſes, ver. 14. They counted it uncharitable to withold a few herbs from a Levite; but not ſo, to kill the prophets, and ſtone them, who were ſent to reform them, ver. 34—37. They would faſt twice a week from a meal's meat, but would glut themſelves every day with the gains of their extortion and avarice; they gave a little alms with the ſound of a trumpet, but ſilently made many beggars to need them by their ſecret frauds.

THIS being the caſe, it raiſed the juſt indignation of the holy Jeſus; in him was no guile; he could not bear with ſilent patience to ſee ſuch ſhameful hypocriſy practiſed, and the poor people deluded into a miſtaken opinion

nion of their ſanctity, and a dangerous veneration for ſuch blind and corrupt guides. SERM. I.

HEREUPON he, who taught the *way of God in truth and cared for no man*, arraigns the Scribes and Phariſees of hypocriſy in this article alſo. *Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, aniſe and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; theſe ought ye to have done, and not to have left the others undone.*

NOT to enter on a large diſcourſe of hypocriſy, or on the rules of juſtice, mercy and faithfulneſs, which would be beſides my preſent purpoſe; I ſhall only take notice of ſome conſiderable directions for the right ordering our practice by a wiſe and orderly obſervance of God's laws; which we may take under the following rules, which are juſt obſervations or inferences from the text.

I. WE may obſerve that the living in the mere omiſſion and neglect of thoſe virtues and duties which are incumbent on us, is enough to render us criminals in the ſight of God: For tho' theſe Phariſees had no doubt

SERM. I. acted contrary to the precept, doing many positive injuries and forbidden cruelties, as well as neglected to do the just and merciful things required; yet our Lord exhibits his charge in the negative, *Ye have omitted, or ye have left undone*, &c. thereby to teach us, that however it may be more heinous to act the direct contrary to our duty by vicious practices, yet not to act virtuously is of itself criminal.

THE great law-giver has not only laid restraints upon us by forbidding us to do what is wicked, but has also injoined us many positive duties of piety, and mercy, and justice, in the several relations of life wherein we stand, which if we do not fulfil, we stand condemned. The barren fig-tree was curst and sentenced to be cut down, *Luke* xiii. 6. not for its poisonous fruits, but because it brought forth none at all, tho' it had been dreſt and manured; and likewise the vine-branches which bear no fruit, *John* xv. 2. tho' they do not bring forth sour grapes, as some others.

IN the acting wickedness we are profane, but in neglecting to do good we are unprofitable, and in both cases we shall be wicked. The slothful man who did not use his talent, tho' he had done no hurt with it, is reproached as

as a wicked ſervant, *Mat.* xxv. 26. and as ſuch was puniſhed, ver. 30. And we know the proceſs at the great day is deſcribed not by a roll of groſs crimes, but after this manner, *Ye did* not *feed, ye did* not *clothe, ye did* not *viſit*, ver. 43, 45. SERM. I.

IT concerns us therefore to inquire and conſider what duties and offices are aſſigned us either as reaſonable creatures and as chriſtians in common, or as placed in our particular relations, that we may not careleſly neglect God or man, but diſcharge a good conſcience towards both.

A great part of the world are very unmindful of this; they are perhaps ſenſible that to break the commands, *thou ſhalt not kill, thou ſhalt not commit adultery*, &c. by poſitive tranſgreſſions, is dangerous wickedneſs, and theſe acts can ſcarce eſcape their bitter reflections, as done in direct wilful oppoſition to the law; but theſe men fall ſilently into omiſſions of doing good, live careleſs of God and man, and think all is well if none can ſay they ever did a wicked thing, or injured any man; like the Phariſee, *Luke* xviii. 11. *I am not an extortioner, unjuſt, an adulterer*, &c.

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I MUST confeſs, as the world goes, this is ſome conſiderable attainment, and as our Lord ſaid when among ſtrangers and enemies, he that is not againſt us, is with us. The torrent of vice is ſo ſtrong, and there is ſuch plenty of wickedneſs, miſchief, fraud, intemperance and profaneneſs, that we are glad if we fall into the hands of ſuch as are harmleſs and barely innocent, and think we are come off very well, if we live only among ſuch neighbours, as will not be troubleſome, rude and vicious; as will refrain their tongues and hands from evil, tho' they have not the excellency of ſhining lights.

BUT tho' this may content our neighbour, it will not ſatisfy our Lord and maſter; he expects active ſervice and much fruit, that we love him and ſerve him continually, that our light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee our good works, as well as ſee no evil ones; that we be bleſſings in our ſeveral ſtations, afford a bright and an alluring example to others, and even adorn the doctrine of our Saviour, not only by denying all ungodlineſs, but alſo by living ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in the world, as a people zealous of good works.

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II. We may obſerve that even in the laws of God there is a great diſtinction to be made by us; ſome are of more weight and importance, of more intrinſic excellence and uſe than others. We need not fear the caſting any odium or reflexion on the divine laws by making this compariſon, ſince it is made by our Lord himſelf; here are the *graviora legis*, and elſewhere *Mat.* v. 19. he allows the *minutula legis.* As in faith and knowledge ſome points are more neceſſary and uſeful to be taught and believed than others, ſo in the commandments ſome are of more conſequence and neceſſarily to be practiſed: Our Saviour ſpeaks of a great commandment, and a ſecond like unto it, he intends it comparatively above other commands; and no wonder God allows us to make this difference, when himſelf proclaims his own different eſteem of theſe his laws. *Hoſea* vi. 6. Thus moral virtues and duties have an indiſputable claim to precedency, when compared with rituals and ceremonial inſtitutions; inſomuch that the holy author of thoſe rites, tho' he had required them by ſolemn laws and upon ſevere penalties, ſeems in ſome ſort to treat theſe inſtitutions with little leſs than contempt. When

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SERM. I. ſome would with ceremonial piety have commuted with moral duties, *Who*, ſays he, *hath required this at your hands? Iſaiah* i. 12. Nay, if they would give him ten thouſand times more of that ſort, *viz.* thouſands of rams and ten thouſand rivers of oil, he ſtill diſdains it with, *What has the Lord required of thee, but to do juſtice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Mic.* vi. 8.

NOR is this difference only between morals and rituals, but in a leſs meaſure a difference is to be made in morals too; of theſe our Lord ſpeaks *Mat.* v. 19. where he calls ſome the *leſs commandments*; and we often find ſome parts of the goſpel religion injoined with an *above all things* do this and that, *Eph.* vi. 16. *Col.* iii. 14. and in a compariſon of very eminent graces, faith, hope and charity, it is ſaid the greateſt of theſe is charity, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 13. Only with this difference in the two caſes, that ritual poſitive laws might not only be omitted, but broke to ſerve the ends of mercy, as the ſabbath's reſt and the law of the ſhew-bread in *David's* caſe, *Mat.* xii. but a moral duty may only be omitted to give place to a greater, when there is not room for both, but muſt never be contradicted by doing a moral evil.

I may do good to one and not to another, when my ability extends not to both; but I may never do injustice to one on any account, nor do evil that a greater good may come.

I would make this inference here in its proper place: Hence we may learn that the goodness or malignity of moral principles or actions does not solely depend on the positive commands or revealed laws of God; but that there are eternal distinctions between good and evil, founded on the intrinsic nature of things antecedent to revelation: for otherwise there would be no difference in the acts of obedience, since all his laws are enacted by the same authority. There would be equal excellency in acts of obedience to one as to another, if all their goodness lay in their being commanded; and God might with as much honour have said he would have sacrifice rather than mercy, as the contrary, since one had been as much a compliance with his laws as the other, and as good as the other, if their whole goodness were derived from mere arbitrary commands. But because from the nature of things (which also is the will of the great creator of all) there are some principles

must

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must needs be good, and ſome evil, commanded or not, forbidden or not, therefore God has required the one, and forbidden the other by his written law, as he had before by the law of nature: and therefore he ſtill eſteems one before the other in our obſervance, becauſe tho' all be alike commanded, yet all were not alike good; as in current coin, tho' the ſame ſtamp be on many ſorts, yet there is great difference in the real value.

III. I PASS on to a third obſervation, which is this, That among the weightier and more important matters of religion, the duties of the ſecond table are to be number'd, or thoſe relative ſocial virtues of judgment, mercy and faith: Theſe are the things our Lord, who beſt knew what true religion was, expreſly commends and places in this high and noble rank.

1. *Judgment*, or juſtice in giving every one his right, whether it be in our own caſe, or when we are made judges in that of others, as theſe men among the Jews often were. Neither by violence nor injurious fraud may we obſtruct the juſt claim of any man, nor diſturb

turb his poſſeſſion, nor withold what is his due. SERM. I.

2. *Mercy*, in being kindly affected to all Men, rejoicing in their welfare, and forwarding their comfort, eſpecially pitying their miſery, viſiting the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, either with our counſel or our ſubſtance, or other compaſſionate aſſiſtance, by which we may any way eaſe their pained bodies or grieved minds; nay, we muſt be ready to prevent their miſery in either. Mercy alſo conſiſts in ſparing thoſe who have deſerved ill at our hands, and on whom it is in our power to inflict it, forbearing and forgiving as God for Chriſt's ſake forgives us. *Eph.* v. *ult.*

3. *Faith*, that is, faithfulneſs or fidelity in all our dealings, in oppoſition to deceit, treachery and falſhood, acting in all things with ſuch ſincerity, honeſty and truth, that men may rely on our engagements, and ſecurely truſt us without fearing any trick or evaſion.

You ſee by the very mention of theſe virtues how highly uſeful they are to the good of mankind, and to make ſociety ſweet and ſafe; and therefore in our holy religion, which was given for the good and comfort of man,

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and not to ſupply any wants of God, who is above all need, they are of high account and eſteem.

YOU might perceive this under the foregoing obſervation, that in the compariſon between ſeveral inſtances of religion the preference was uſually adjudged to theſe relative virtues and duties, ſo far that the great God poſtpones his own worſhip thereto. *Mat.* v. 24. *Firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* As if he had ſaid, God had rather wait for his homage, than you ſhould delay juſtice and mercy, in being reconciled and making ſatisfaction to your brother; and he refuſed the Phariſees complaint, when they would honour God with that ſubſtance with which they ought to honour their father and mother, *Mat.* xv. 6.

SO that I think they mightily miſtake the chriſtian religion, who aim to ſink the eſteem of theſe ſocial virtues, and to degrade them into the loweſt rank; they weigh them not, I am ſure, in the ſame righteous balance with our Lord, if in theirs they be found but light, which in his were found weighty.

BUT yet I have not ſaid that theſe relative virtues are abſolutely the moſt excellent and nobleſt

noble∫t parts of religion, or above all the in- SERM. I.
∫tances of piety and ſolid devotion, becauſe I well remember that our Lord has told us that the firſt and great commandment is, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God*; and *Luke* xi. 42. He tells us this was one of the weightier matters paſs'd over by the Phariſees, thereby teaching us that there is ſomething more ſublime, more important, and of more powerful effect in this grand principle of all religion, *viz.* a mind devoutly affected towards God, to have the ſoul deeply poſſeſt with an awful veneration for the majeſty of the ſupreme being, before whoſe all-comprehending eye we and all our ways are naked and manifeſted, to be inflamed with ardours of a ſuperlative love of him as the moſt amiable being and our beſt friend, our liberal benefactor and our endeared heavenly father, to dwell upon the admiring contemplations of his immenſe perfections, to ſerve him with inward fervours of ſerious devotion, and aſcend upwards in the aſpirations of a devout mind, to meditate in his law day and night, to be moulded into an abſolute conformity and reſignation to his will, and to live in the joyful expectation and deſire of arriving at thoſe heavenly man-

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ſions, where we may be filled with the fruits of his eternal almighty love.

THESE are the nobleſt exerciſes of pious love and of all religion, which are converſant with the moſt excellent object, and raiſe the mind to ſuch an elevated degree of purity and ſtrength, that it makes all other parts of religion eaſy; it is this quick and habitual ſenſe of God upon our minds, that improves our own diſpoſition, and is the living root of other virtues. The mind that, like *Moſes*, is much on the mount with God, will certainly ſhine beautifully when it deſcends to converſe with men, and he who firſt loves him that begat, cannot but ſincerely love him that is begotten alſo; I think therefore when this is allowed, the next place is due to the love of our neighbour.

BEWARE then of contemptuous thoughts of theſe ſocial virtues, like the Phariſees, as if they were too low and mean an entertainment for ſpiritual men and believers. Say not theſe are common fruits which grow in ordinary ſoil with little care, for as ordinary as they may ſeem, I muſt tell you, they are no leſs than the fruits of the ſpirit. *Gal.* v. 22. and ſo *Epheſ.* v. 9. (juſt the very matters of my text) as much as faith and hope

hope are, and not more easily attained; nay, they are the very image of God, and an amiable conformity to our Redeemer, who was meek and lowly, who went about doing good, and in him was no guile; they are a noble preparation for solemn approaches to God in worship, *Psalm* xv. 1, 2. and no doubt but he, who was here a zealous advocate for these virtues, will be an hearty advocate for those, who conscientiously cherish and practise them. SERM. I.

THEY much mistake religion, who make it to consist in forms and devotions, in notions and opinions, in rites and ordinances, and leave out the substantial virtues of truth, honesty, and charity: indeed he is the best worshipper of God who practises these virtues, for what is worship, but the giving honour to God, and shewing forth his glory by due acknowledgments? He therefore honours God most, who makes the worthiest representation of him to the world; and this he does, who is universally good and upright and useful, not he who abounds in forms and ceremonies. It is not by many prayers and vows, and abstinences, and censorious bitter zeal, that the excellency and goodness of God is

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ſhewn, ſo much as by him, who is merciful as his heavenly father is, in ſteddy goodneſs and diffuſive tender charity; this is a becoming and amiable repreſentation of God, beyond all that appears in the auſterities, and formal devotions, of a falſe, cruel, and uncharitable man, who is for damning and perſecuting all who differ from him.

I ſhould now proceed to ſome further obſervations, but theſe muſt be defer'd to another opportunity.

SERMON

SERMON II.

Moral duties to be prefer'd before poſitive ones.

MATTHEW xxiii. ver. 23.

Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, aniſe and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone.

IN diſcourſing on theſe words, I took notice, that they afforded us ſeveral conſiderable directions for the right ordering our practice by a wiſe and orderly obſervance of God's laws. In the firſt place I obſerved from them,

SERM. II.

I. THAT the living in the mere omiſſion and neglect of thoſe virtues and duties, which are incumbent on us, is enough to render us criminal in the ſight of God.

II. THAT even in the laws of God, there is a great diſtinction to be made by us, ſome being of more weight and importance, of more intrinſic uſe and excellence, than others.

III. THAT among the weightier, and more important matters of religion, the duties of the ſecond table are to be number'd; or thoſe relative ſocial virtues of juſtice, mercy, and faithfulneſs: I proceed now in the fourth place to obſerve,

IV. THAT he who would ſhew himſelf acted by a true ſpirit of religion, muſt have a conſcientious regard to *all the laws* of God, both the more weighty, and the leſs; for our Lord ſays, *theſe ought ye to have done, and not to have left the others undone*, to teach us that our obedience is then ſincere, when it is univerſal: By which it is ſuppoſed, he deſigned to rebuke a common erroneous practice of theſe men, who were wont to make choice of ſome one eminent precept of their

their law, to the obſervance of which they would addict themſelves with wonderful zeal and care, in expectation that this ſhould atone for their remiſſneſs, in ſome other points; Some ſelected the law of the ſabbath, ſome that of ſacrifices, by a very rigid obſervance whereof they hoped at leaſt to balance accounts with God. SERM. II.

HENCE the queſtion was put by one of them to our Saviour, which was the great commandment of the law; in anſwer to which, our Lord directs him to one, or rather two, which comprehended them all, *viz.* the love of God, and of our neighbour, which bore the whole weight of the law and the prophets; thereby ſhewing, that no partial obedience, or regard to any ſingle precept, would be ſufficient.

I WISH there were nothing of this deceit ſtill left among Chriſtians; many of whom ſeem to affect ſome particular practices, or ſome favourite notions, with mighty earneſtneſs and warmth; and yet are ſo indifferent in other plain branches of religion, as if they thought their neglect of theſe would be excuſed by their zeal for what to be ſure they will count the great command. How-

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ever, it is manifeſt, ſome who make great pretences to devotion, are very uncharitable; ſome, who are very beneficent, juſt, and courteous, are yet deſtitute of ſobriety and temperance; and each value themſelves upon their ſeveral qualifications, forgetting what they have left undone, as if by yielding in ſome points they thought God muſt not bear hard upon them in others. But if this habitual partiality would be accepted for ſincere holineſs, it were a very trifling attainment, ſince it is eaſy to pick out ſome precept which may ſuit our intereſt and humour; for that man muſt be very unhappily framed indeed, who, among ſuch great choice as the laws of God afford, can find nothing that will ſit eaſy upon him.

BUT this is no better than hypocriſy; for to obſerve only ſuch laws, as we for other reaſons like, is no obedience at all to God, but a falſe pretence; ſince if God's authority was the ſupreme reaſon of our compliance, it would reach to all his known commands: ſo that this is rather doing our own will, than God's, and is no better than aſ-

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ſuming a diſpenſing power over the divine laws, altho' it be but in any one inſtance. SERM. II.

1. WE undoubtedly can't be excuſed in omitting any great inſtance of morality, tho' it were but one. The obſervance of all the others, will be ſo far from excuſing the habitual neglect of this, that the neglect of this one, will defeat all the reſt, *Jam.* ii. 10. *He is guilty of all*, that is, he has enervated and ſubverted the whole, by ſubverting the authority, which is the foundation of all; for when a man is arriv'd at that contempt of God, as reſolutely to prefer a favourite luſt, and forbidden gratification to the pleaſing him, all God's laws are diſparaged, and ſtand upon a very precarious bottom, ver. 11. they are obeyed on courteſy, or if there remain any reverence for God's authority, it is not enough to cope with the ſuperior authority of a reigning luſt: We are rebels while we keep him out of but one fort; ſo that we can make no joyful reflexion on, or concluſion from our obedience, till we have reſpect to all God's commands, *Pſalm* cxix. 6. Perhaps ſome may think, they have ground for confidence in ſuch partial obedience, in that we ſo oft

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find acceptance, and a reward promiſed to ſingle virtues, *viz.* to the fear, to the love of God, to faith in Chriſt, to patience, charity, *&c.* But it is obvious in theſe caſes, that thoſe holy principles, mentioned for their great eminence and influence, ſtand for the whole of religion, and are ſuppoſed to be accompanied with all other graces, as flow from the ſame root; that he who fears and loves God, will keep his commandments, and will love his brother alſo; and that a true faith will not be barren or unfruitful, for he who is led by the ſpirit, will walk by the ſpirit: Otherwiſe as far as any of thoſe religious principles may be ſeparated from others, and ſtand ſingle without the genuine fruits, ſo far they will not avail us to acceptance with God. *Jam.* ii. 14.

2. NOR is our obedience ſincere, if we omit to obſerve the leſs weighty matters of the law, *viz.* poſitive rites and ordinances; for tho' they muſt be poſtponed to the more important moral duties, yet, when out of that competition, they claim a conſcientious obſervance. The leaſt of the commandments, is a commandment ſtill; and if God have a right to ordain any thing, tho' it be what may ſeem as

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ſmall a matter as mint, aniſe, or cummin; I ſee not on what principle a ſerious and reaſoning man can neglect it. To ſay it is too mean a thing for God to require is, I doubt, to deſpiſe the command; for whatever he has thought fit to honour with the ſuperſcription of his authority is not too mean for us to honour with our ſubjection: Tho' the matter be but a ceremony, yet diſobedience is not ſo; therefore we muſt beware, leſt while we refuſe ſacrifice, we alſo refuſe obedience which is better. If God ſays, as to *Naaman*, *Go waſh in Jordan*, we muſt not deſpiſe the counſel, and ſay, *Are not Abana and Pharpar better?* or our own methods are as good; but, like *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, muſt walk in all the ordinances, as well as the commandments of God, blameleſs *Luke* i. 6. if we would be counted righteous before him. SERM. II.

V. THAT it is eſpecially very heinous and provoking hypocriſy to pretend zeal for religion in its leſſer and circumſtantial matters, and at the ſame time to live in violation of its moral, and more weighty duties. This was the hypocriſy which now awakened the indignation of our Lord and maſter into

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theſe warm, but righteous reproofs and threatnings; to ſee them ſtrain at a gnat, and yet ſwallow a camel; through fear of uncleanneſs to waſh their hands in water, and yet to ſtain them with violence in blood; to talk loudly and honourably of the *temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*, and yet make it a den of robbers, *Jer.* vii. 4, 11.

THO' the holy God had oft declared, that the rituals of his own appointment were of *little* account with him in compariſon of the ſubſtantial virtues of piety, juſtice, and charity; and of *none at all*, when in oppoſition to them, and that mercy is beyond ſacrifice: yet a ceremony was ſo much eaſier than to live holily, and to ſlay a ſacrifice than a luſt; that they would have God accept the exchange, or at leaſt the people muſt: And then ſo long as they were punctual in their rites, and coſtly in their ſacrifices, did but waſh often and pray long, were ſeen frequently at the temple, and at the corner of the ſtreets, if not to perform, yet to expoſe their devotion, they would be ſure to hold the reputation of their ſanctity with the world, tho' their pride and covetouſneſs, their fraud and injuſtice, made them a reproach to any religion.

ligion. This could not be without great hypocriſy, for if they really had any love for religion, they would love that which is moſt eſſential to it. SERM. II.

BUT it is not only hypocriſy, but of the worſt kind, when it does not reſtrain men from immoral practices. It has been judged by ſome, that with reſpect to the honour of religion and the good order of the world, hypocriſy does leſs hurt than open profaneneſs, becauſe it pays ſome homage to true religion, and repreſents it, as a thing truly excellent: but this is, when it goes no further than the appearance of thoſe inward ſentiments and principles, which in deed they are deſtitute of, but yet reſtrains them from breaking out into direct poſitive violations of the laws of ſobriety, juſtice, *&c.* It is otherwiſe, when it prevails not to keep clean hands, and a decent behaviour.

IF the man under the protection of his religious character has his temper corrupt, and the more boldly carries on miſchievous deſigns, acts cruelly and unjuſtly, or deals deceitfully with his neighbour; it is then that it gives the deepeſt wounds to the honour of religion, *Rom.* ii. 23, 24. it betrays it with a kiſs, expoſes it as if it were a treacherous cheat,

SERM. II. cheat, and an ill-natur'd principle, and makes it matter of ſcorn and deriſion to infidels; but wo to him by whom ſuch offence comes.

INDEED our Lord *Jeſus* expreſſes himſelf in warmer reſentments againſt this iniquity, than even at his crucifixion; then he opened not his mouth, he reviled not, he threaten'd not, but now he ſharply reproves and denounces dreadful woes.

IF ever our meek Lord had any thing like invective, and pointed ſatyr, it was when he had a Phariſee to uncaſe; yet, it was not in random paſſion, that he uſed opprobrious terms and names, but he ſhews they were the ſerious dictates of juſt reaſon, by giving undeniable proofs of every cenſure.

HE never appears to have reſented the faults of the Sadducees with all their errors, ſo much as this hypocritical wickedneſs of the Phariſees, and their miſplaced zeal: Altho' the Sadducees were more erroneous in point of ſpeculation, *Acts* xxiii. 8. yet ſee how differently he rebukes them, *Mat.* xxii. 29. *Ye do err, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God.* Their errors in faith, however to be confuted by juſt conſequence, as we ſee there, and indeed of huge importance and influence, did not provoke

voke our holy master, who well knew how to place and shew his zeal aright, so much as the base, proud, insulting, and imperious spirit and carriage of these orthodox, but unjust and uncharitable Pharisees. Nay, I presume from their principles mentioned, as well as from *Josephus*'s account, the morals of the Sadducees were no better than those of the Pharisees; but then they did not abuse religion, nor deal so dishonestly with God and man; if their morals were naught, they did not pretend to compensate for them by such trifles, they did not treat others with haughty disdain, as their superiors in piety, nor encourage themselves to do ill from a confidence in their good works, nor in contradiction to their principles. SERM. II.

BUT the Pharisees, with all their wickedness, boasted of their knowledge, made great demands of submission to themselves, as the Rabbi's and Fathers of the church, of reverence and respectful salutations, of precedency of place, with many nauseous affectations of the praises of men for their supposed sanctity; and yet by doing all to be seen, it appears with all their devotion they were their own idols, and worship'd God that others might worship them,

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them, and yet were neither juſt nor honeſt in their dealings: This prepoſterous diſhoneſt zeal rendered them moſt odious hypocrites, ſo that harlots were fairer for heaven than they, *Mat.* xxi. 31.

OUR Chriſtian religion indeed abounds not with ſuch a number of rituals, or poſitive external inſtitutions to employ our zeal about. To be baptized as a badge of our diſcipleſhip of Chriſt, and a bond to purity and newneſs of life, and to celebrate the holy ſupper, as a ſtanding memorial of our great benefactor, who loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, are the two ordinances of Chriſtianity, which no doubt were wiſely injoin'd, and claim a conſcientious regard: And yet if the chief of our zeal be ſpent about the manner of uſing theſe rites, rather than anſwering their ends, and more than loving the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity; if we are concerned to be baptiz'd into Chriſt's name, and yet return with the ſow to her wallowing in the mire, zealous to eat in his preſence, and yet be workers of iniquity; partake with ſcruple of the holy cup, and then make no ſcruple to partake of the cup of drunkards; and are more concerned at wanting ſome cir-

circumſtantial preparation for a ſacrament, than we are at lying, defrauding, or acting revengefully; if men reverence God's ſanctuary, and yet defile his temple; are vehement contenders for faith, without that faith which works by love; for being counted orthodox in their faith, more than to be purified by it; if they remember the fourth commandment, and forget the reſt; faſt from fleſh, but not from ſtrife; are ſtartled at the mention of hereſy in controverted opinions, but familiar with the hereſies, that are the works of the fleſh, joined with variance, ſtrife, hatred, &c. *Gal.* v. 20. is not all this groſs hypocriſy? SERM. II.

IN a word, if we pretend a zeal for any thing in religion, but have not conſcience enough to be honeſt, juſt, and merciful, we only ſeem to be religious, and our religion is vain, *Jam.* i. 26, 27. becauſe, pure religion and undefiled, is to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep our ſelves unſpotted from the world.

BUT it is yet worſe, when our zeal is but about dubious points, and about human explications and deciſions, as was the caſe in the text about the extent of theſe tithes: Perhaps it was none of God's meaning, tho' the tradition of

SERM. II. of the elders had determined it; and what hypocriſy is it to be more zealous in doing, or teaching others to do, what we are not ſure God's authority is concerned in, than what he has certainly written in capitals, both in the law of nature and revelation.

FROM what has been ſaid, we may learn,

1. THAT there is need of prudence and wiſdom, in the right ordering our religious converſation: We are bid to walk accurately and exactly, *Eph.* v. 15. not to be unwiſe ſervants. We have need not only to learn what are our duties in general, but in what rank and order they lie, that we may know which are to have the preference, when a competition ariſes by their interfering; otherwiſe we may often create needleſs ſcruples in our own minds, and by running into cenſure, may in many caſes do ill by an indiſcreet irregular zeal, while we think to do well: This wiſdom appears in our Saviour's conduct as to the ſabbath, *Mat.* xii. and the want of it in the diſciples, when they would have call'd for fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, *Luke* ix. 5. and in thoſe in *John* xvi. 3. who ſhould

ſhould think, that by killing the diſciples of Chriſt, they ſhould do God ſervice. SERM. II.

2. WE may hence infer the great excellency of the chriſtian religion, which is ſingularly adapted to promote theſe weightier matters. It has delivered us from the multiplicity of thoſe Jewiſh ordinances, which too much interrupted and diverted that ſerious zeal, which was due to the ſubſtantial duties of religion, but was expended upon the ſhadow.

IT has moreover preſs'd theſe grand inſtances of morality with great emphaſis and forcible motives. What a noble rule of juſtice is that, in *Mat.* vii. 12? *Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them*: So plain, that every man may underſtand it, and always at hand; 'tis nigh us in the heart, a rule not to be diſputed. What a mighty place has love to our neighbour in Chriſt's law? It is the very darling precept of the new teſtament, and to enforce it, no mercy is to be expected for him, who does not obſerve it, *Jam.* ii. 13. Truth in our words and promiſes, and fidelity in our ſeveral truſts are not forgot. *Eph.* iv. 25. it is ſaid, *Putting away lying, let every man ſpeak truth with*

SERM. II. *his neighbour*; and 1 *Theſ.* iv. 6. *Let no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter.* So that more of this might be expected from Chriſtians than any, becauſe, tho' they are founded on the principles of nature, which points them out, yet every man cannot ſo quickly come at them by a train of arguments, but the authority of God ſtrikes quick and ſtrong in the caſe; ſo that if men are unjuſt, and cruel, and falſe, the goſpel is clear from blame: Indeed it may be the innocent occaſion of ill, as *Mat.* x. 21. when brother ſhall deliver up brother to death, but Chriſtians are the ſufferers, and not the doers.

3. BEWARE how you apply this cenſure of hypocriſy. It would be too raſh to carry it ſo far, as to condemn all, who may ſeem more zealous for ſome minute concerns of religion, than you think they deſerve. If the Phariſees had only been minute in the tithing mint and cummin, and had not violated juſtice and mercy; if they had not made void the commandments of God by their tradition, their caſe and character had been much better.

IF any therefore, without neglecting the great principles of practical religion, place religion in ſome notions or rituals, in which there

there is none, or advance them beyond their due rank; yet if they are men of conſcience in other matters alſo, deſiring in all things to live honeſtly; far be it, that we ſhould reproach them as hypocrites, that we ſhould reject them, or ſo much as deſpiſe them. This was the caſe, *Rom.* xiv. about eating herbs, and keeping days; *weak* they were, but not *wicked*, ver. 10. We ſhould therefore let it paſs as an infirmity, at leaſt we ſhould go no further, than St. *Paul*'s charitable jealouſy, *Gal.* iii. 11. *I am afraid of you.*

4. THO' ſocial relative virtues are to be reckon'd among the weightier matters of religion, yet reſt not in them as the only weighty ones. Two things eſpecially are to be added:

(1.) A ſerious ſpirit of devotion, or piety, and love to God, as the firſt and great commandment; for this is the root and principle of all religious juſtice, mercy, and faithfulneſs, which would ſoon languiſh and grow faint, if not nouriſhed by walking humbly with God. Make him the object of your habitual reverential thoughts; adore his perfections with humble admiration; let him be the centre of your delightful affections;

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retire often from the hurry of this world, and conſider what you have to do with him; lie abaſed at his foot in renewed acts of dependance on him, that you may conſtantly have the ſtrong impreſſions of this great being upon you, and live in his fear all the day long.

THIS devotion is a thing highly reaſonable, and of great efficacy; it will rouze our ſlumbring minds, and impregnate the principles of religion with life and activity; it is always moſt important for the purifying and improving our own temper, and when the tree is thus made good, others will ſoon find the fruits to be ſo too. Let God therefore be the daily meditation of your hearts.

(2.) WE Chriſtians muſt add hereto, faith in the Lord Jeſus, which is to us an eſſential part of religion. To glorify God in Chriſt, by believing in him, by doing all in his name, and expecting all through his mediation, is what nature has not taught, but grace has revealed. Our faith in Chriſt gives us ſuch noble arguments and powerful motives to every good work, that we have great advantages above the Jews themſelves; therefore the Apoſtle in 2 *Tim.* iii. 15. plainly ſuppoſes ſome

ſome ſort of defect or weakneſs in the Jewiſh religion for ſalvation, which needed to be compleated by goſpel faith; for it is of old-teſtament Scriptures he ſpeaks, that *they were able to make wiſe unto ſalvation*, (not completely of themſelves, but) *through faith, which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; ſo that what was wanted for perfecting the man of God in every good work was ſupplied by the goſpel. SERM. III.

5. Let us all be directed where to exert our zeal, and in what to exerciſe it: elſe, if we only talk of theſe virtues with large encomiums, and do not put them in practice, what are we the better? We mutually ſtand in need of them; ſince we are ſo much dependent on each other, therefore God has wrought them into our frame; they are of extenſive uſe in all places, buſineſſes, and ſtations, and moſt ſtrongly affect the honour of God and religion.

LET us therefore be ſtrictly careful, that, while we do the other ſmaller matters of religion, we do not leave theſe weightier ones undone.

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The deſign of divine patience is to give ſpace for repentance.

REV. ii. 21.

And I gave her ſpace to repent of her fornication, but ſhe repented not.

THE inſtructions, which our Lord Jeſus ſends to the churches of *Aſia*, are ſo important, and of ſuch univerſal application and uſe, that he ſummons all to audience and attention, ver. 29. *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the ſpirit ſaith unto the churches.* And oh! that every one, who has an ear to hear any thing, would ſeriouſly hearken to what the ſpirit here ſays; eſpecially the careleſs

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ſinner, who is miſpending his repenting time, and comes particularly under this heavy charge.

THE words are part of our Lord's meſſage to the church of *Thyatira*, who had a few things againſt this church amidſt his great commendations of her fidelity, diligence, and proficiency in religion: Her fault was, that ſhe too much ſuffer'd, (that is, by too much countenancing, or at leaſt not enough diſowning) that woman *Jezabel* to ſeduce into fornication and idolatry. Some ſuppoſe this name belonged to a whole ſect of ſeducers, but I ſee no reaſon for it; it might be ſome particular woman, who pretended to be a propheteſs, and was named *Jezabel* by way of infamy, becauſe like to her in bringing in idolatry and unclean practices: but then having deſcribed her corrupt principles, he turns his rebuke to her, and as a preface to his ſevere threatnings, he ſets forth the aggravation of her ſin by the charge in the text, that when he had forborn ſo long to give her an opportunity of repenting, ſhe repented not at all: *I gave her ſpace to repent of her fornication, but ſhe repented not.* From which words

words I intend to diſcourſe of theſe two points. SERM. III.

I. THE great advantages, which almighty God affords to ſinners by allowing them an opportunity of repentance.

II. The great folly, the inexcuſable guilt, and deplorable miſery of ſinners in the loſs of this opportunity, when they repent not.

I. THE great advantages afforded to ſinners by allowing them opportunities for repentance: Under this head two things are to be obſerved.

1. THAT offending ſinners are admitted to a recovery from their unhappy ſtate by ſin upon ſerious repentance.

THO' *Jezabel* had committed fornication, yet our Lord expected and called for her repentance in order to avert his provoked anger, which ſhews, that not only in ordinary caſes of common infirmities and inadvertencies repentance will gain acceptance with God, but that even in other articles of a more heinous nature, where the ſin is of a deeper dye, even there the ſacrifices of a broken and a penitent mind he will not deſpiſe. *Pſalm* li. 17. How repugnant ſoever wickedneſs is

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SERM. III. to his nature, and how much ſoever it lays us expoſed to his vengeance, yet it is not inexorable vengeance, ſuch as no repentance can move, but leaves room and encouragement for the ſinner's coming to a better mind. *Pſalm* cxxx. 4.

IN vain were repentance ſo earneſtly required, and the ſinner addreſs'd to with ſuch importunate ſollicitations to return, if there were no advantage to be gained by it; and therefore it was but natural to join the preaching of repentance and remiſſion of ſins together, *Luke.* xxiv. 47. The ſinner cannot ſay, *There is no hope, therefore I may as well go on in my evil ways*; but contrariwiſe, if he ceaſe to do evil, tho' he have done a great deal, he may yet do well, *Iſai.* i. 16. The prodigal ſon undutifully left his father's houſe and ſervice to indulge his ſinful luſts; yet when he returned humbly and with a better mind, he was taken in again with the marks of great affection.

INNOCENCY is certainly better than repentance, but when any have loſt the one, it is an ineſtimable advantage to repair that loſs by the other; it is better not to ſuffer ſhipwreck, but in ſuch a misfortune it is an happy eſcape by ſome plank to recover the deſired ſhore.

ſhore. This remedy the divine pity allow'd the offender of old, *Ezek.* xviii. 27. and more fully under the grace of the goſpel, where repentance is now to be accompanied with faith in Chriſt Jeſus, *Acts* xx. 21.

INDEED it ſeems reaſonable to expect this mercy of God from the natural notions of his boundleſs goodneſs: for tho' it be requiſite that every diſobedience to his righteous commands ſhould ſubject the tranſgreſſor to puniſhment, ſince moral agents cannot be governed but by laws, nor thoſe laws be without a ſuitable ſanction of threats; yet one cannot but hope that a benign being, who has commanded and inſpired his creatures with ſuch ſentiments of compaſſion towards a relenting brother, no longer our enemy, will not always be inexorable to his creatures, who ſincerely lay down their enmity, lament their diſobedience and his diſpleaſure, and with great duty and affection return to his ſervice: I cannot think it was ever otherwiſe.

IT is often ſaid, and by many, that God eſtabliſhed with our firſt parents a covenant of works, by which every the leaſt tranſgreſſion was damnable, and no repentance available to mercy; but I ſee no proof of any ſuch matter

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matter in ſcripture. Indeed for the preſumptuous crime of eating the forbidden fruit in defiance of a ſolemn command, which had been given to preſerve the ſovereignty of their maker, they were threaten'd with death; but it no where appears, that every error or defect below that would have expoſed them to that death, much leſs to eternal damnation; or if they had ſtopt at the firſt irregular deſire, they would not have been pardoned upon repentance in conſiſtency with that law. I am not fond of believing that a good God would deal ſo ſeverely with his creatures, who, tho' innocent and pure, were yet plainly frail, unleſs I ſaw it well atteſted.

BUT however that matter be, we are fully aſſured, that in all other diſpenſations God has made the matter clear, that true repentance reſtores the ſinner to his favour, ſo that, tho' he may chaſten his iniquity with the rod of correction in this life, yet in the next his loving kindneſs, ſhall not depart from him, but he will take away his iniquity, and receive him graciouſly, even tho' once he were in his own ſenſe the chief of ſinners. Thoſe words therefore in the *Acts* iii. 19. *Repent ye and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted*

blotted out, is the voice of God to them, who have grievouſly offended; and is the firſt thing included under this head. SERM. III.

2. THE ſecond favour is, that offending ſinners have uſually ſpace and time allowed them in abundance for this very reaſon, that they may repent and recover.

THAT they have this ſpace through the riches of God's forbearance, we ſee and know; the world is full of ſuch inſtances, as it is of living ſinners, who of the Lord's mercies are not yet conſumed. Tho' the great governour of the world has declared no fixt rule or meaſure, what time he will afford ſuch offender, and we ſometimes ſee inſtances, where men periſh by a ſwift and early deſtruction, when judgment lingers not, nor does damnation ſlumber; yet we muſt needs obſerve, what a long courſe in ſin ſome run, and after many heinous crimes unrepented of continue as before. They have ſinned unto death, *i. e.* the moſt deadly damning ſins, and ſtill live in appearance at eaſe and liberty, tho' they have greatly dared the vengeance of the Almighty; and after they have contracted great guilt, and are many thouſand talents in arrear to divine juſtice, yet they walk about ſecure, as

fearing

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fearing no arreſt; ſo that, as was ſaid of *Iſrael*, forty years long God has been grieved with them before he ſwears peremptorily in his wrath againſt them.

THO' the reaſonable ſuggeſtions of juſtice are, *Cut them down, they cumber the ground*, they annoy, they corrupt the place where they are; yet he liſtens eaſily to the voice of interceſſion, and tries them a few years more, ſo that they grow old in ſin not merely through accident or the ſtrength of their conſtitution, but becauſe he holds their ſouls in life, and heals their diſeaſes, that they may have ſpace and time for repentance. Here is then a great deal of leiſure for reflexion and inſtruction, for a man to conſider his ways, and to break off his ſins, to undo them in their effects as far as may be, and to retrieve all again, to recover the favour of God, the peace of his own mind, and future hopes.

BUT this is not all which is intended, namely, that we have time allow'd, which may ſuffice for repentance, and may ſerve for that purpoſe as well as others, if we will ſo uſe it; but that it is for this end expreſly, that God ſpares us, and with this view, that we ſhould amend and grow better. He would

have us know it, that it is not merely for the preſent delight in the grateful reliſh we have of life, or for gratifying our ſenſual deſires, or purſuing our worldly projects, that he preſerves our lives, but that we may have time to grow wiſer and better, to heal our backſlidings, and to mortify our vicious luſts and paſſions, which debaſe our minds, diſturb our peace, and make us unfit for any comfortable being in another world. So St. *Peter* tells us, 2d Epiſt. iii. 9. *God is long-ſuffering, becauſe he is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.* He knows beſt what will be the ſad conſequence of men's dying in their ſin and guilt, and ſince this can be prevented only by repentance in this preſent life, he in great compaſſion continues our lives to give us the happy opportunity of recovering our ſouls from the gall of bitterneſs and the bond of iniquity: As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, it may be of great advantage to evil men to be ſpared a little longer; perhaps, they may think better of it, and ceaſe to do evil: Many do that raſhly, which on a review they ſeriouſly repent of; if they have a little time, it may be ſome good conſideration or

other

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other will move them; some instruction, some more experience, or some affliction will recover them: Men shall not thus complain; therefore the long-suffering God will not put them past all hope, but waits to give them opportunity of repentance.

II. I come now under the second general head to show the great folly, guilt, and misery of sinners, who repent not: And here are two things to be offered.

1. THAT this great opportunity of repentance is often lost, and by men's continuing still impenitent no advantage is made of this great favour of almighty God.

To some indeed, it is hoped, the long-suffering of God has proved their salvation, and the riches of his forbearance have led them to repentance, who, if they had died early, had died in their sins, both under the commanding and condemning power of them. 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. but yet by being spared, have lived to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and have been taught by the grace of God to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.

BUT alas, for the generality it is grievous to consider, how little they understand the design

deſign of divine patience, and the little or elſe evil uſe they make of it. How few are there who think, that the change of their lives by becoming better men is the great end they ſhould purſue? One lays projects for his pleaſure, another for his ambition, to mend his lot, as he imagines, in this world, but not to amend his ways nor his condition in relation to God and a future ſtate. That lamentation, which our Lord Jeſus with ſuch moving accents of grief and compaſſion utter'd over *Jeruſalem* with tears, might be often renewed, if the like compaſſion were to be found as eaſily, as the like occaſion for it. *O that thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which make for thy peace!* Luke xix. 41, 42.

IT is natural hereupon to inquire, whence this comes to paſs, that men ſhould be ſo unconcerned in ſo important an affair: To which I anſwer,

(1.) SOME perhaps are not duly ſenſible of the abſolute neceſſity of repentance; they fancy there is no great evil in their ſins, they flatter themſelves with little excuſes and extenuations, and deceitful arguments from the goodneſs of God miſapprehended by them,

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forgetting that a virtuous mind, and holy behaviour are not required by him merely to ſhew his dominion over men in precarious commands, but as the natural foundation of true happineſs, which cannot be arbitrarily diſpenſed with; for the righteous Lord can by no means love unrighteouſneſs, nor his favourable countenance behold the ungodly; nor is it poſſible, that an impure mind, ſick and languiſhing under ſin and guilt, can be other than uneaſy, vile and miſerable. *The wicked*, ſays the prophet, *are like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt*, *Iſa.* lvii. 20. It is to be feared, that with ſome the very patience of God in order to their repentance abates their ſenſe of its being needful, *Pſal.* l. 21.

(2.) OTHERS by miſtaking the nature of true repentance imagine they repent, when they do not; they call a tranſient paſſion of ſorrow, under a ſtinging conviction of guilt, and the reproaches of an awaken'd mind, repentance, whereas ſorrow is only the firſt ſtep towards repentance 2 *Cor.* vii. 10. but is not of it ſelf true repentance, which implies a thorough and habitual change of life and manners.

(3.) THE

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(3.) THE great reaſon of mens not repenting is their deceiving themſelves with an intention to repent hereafter, and ſo by putting it off from time to time never repent at all.

WE cannot ſuppoſe the generality of ungodly men are utterly ignorant of their own vices, and inſenſible of their guilt and danger by them, or that men, who have ſuch ſentiments, are content to venture on death and eternity in ſuch a dangerous poſture, and to try the worſt of it with undaunted reſolution: No, far from it, they do intend ſome time hereafter to repent, only at preſent they have ſome other concern more preſſing, and they muſt not ſlip the opportunity, hoping that another ſeaſon will not be too late for their repentance: But the miſchief of it is, that there is always this pretence; ſome employment, ſome diverſion or other will ſtill be more urgent with them, and for the ſame reaſon repentance muſt be poſtponed, till after all they repent not.

AND indeed it was but a pretended deſign, for I judge that no man, who perſiſts in any wickedneſs, does or can truly reſolve to repent of it; he may intend to bewail and confeſs his ſin, and to leave it too, when he is in other

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circumſtances, that ſuit not with it; but true repentance implies ſuch a change, that the man would utterly wiſh his ſin undone, and would not upon any account do it again, were he placed under the ſame circumſtances and temptations: Now it is inconſiſtent to ſay I will at preſent do this evil, but I intend hereafter to wiſh I had not done it; for he, who counts it beſt now to commit the ſin, does not pretend to ſee reaſon or motive enough now not to commit it; and how can he ſay he will ſee reaſon for that, where now he ſees none? He knows death and eternity will come into a near view, and that he muſt draw nigh to the judgment-ſeat, and yet at this conceived diſtance, theſe things are not enough to make him now forbear; and if when they approach nearer, they prove more terrible than he thought, and make him repent indeed, yet at preſent it ſeems he does not think them weighty enough to induce him to repent immediately, ſo that he rather thinks he ſhall, than means that he will repent; not ſo much deſigning it, as apprehending he ſhall not be able to avoid it.

2. I OBSERVE in the ſecond place, that loſt opportunities of repentance will hugely aggravate

aggravate the guilt and miſery of unrepenting ſinners. SERM. III.

IT is an heavy article in the charge againſt this wicked *Jezabel*, that to her wickedneſs ſhe added this, that tho' ſhe had ſpace and time to repent, ſhe repented not. For

(1.) IT argues a rooted obſtinacy in ſin, that we are fixed and reſolved in our choice, and the more there is of will in any ſin, the more there is of ſinfulneſs in it.

THE frailty of our weak natures often lays us open to temptations, which may ſeduce us to commit ſeveral iniquities, and then we hope that God will pity our weakneſs and inadvertency, and impute it to ſuch cauſes; but then it muſt appear to be ſo from this, that the ſoul ſoon relents into ſhame and grief, and perſiſts not in a ſinful courſe, but as ſoon as it is better inſtructed, or comes to reflect on its ſins, it renounces them with deteſtation and anguiſh. When therefore there is great ſpace granted to the ſinner, and yet he never repents, but ſtill continues the ſame, and tho' he be frequently called upon, and perſuaded to return, yet he holds faſt his iniquities, this ſhews, that a love for wickedneſs

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prevails in him, and that his heart is reſolved to rebel.

HERE no excuſe can be admitted from temptation or ſurprize; it is a rooted enmity againſt the law of God. In ſo many years never to come to a ſerious reſolution of amendment, never to ſee reaſon to turn to God, never in all that time to be weary of his ſins, and to break out into lamentation and confeſſion, never to be effectually convinced of it, but to love and practiſe it ſtill; this ſhews an incurable ſtubbornneſs.

(2.) IT is diſingenuous ingratitude.

DESPISEST thou then the riches of his forbearance, which ſhould lead thee to repentance? *Rom.* ii. 4. Wilt thou make light of ſuch an eminent favour? Wilt thou continue to offend a God, who is not willing, that thou ſhouldſt periſh, nor to put thee paſt all hope, but waits to be gracious? What can be ſaid in excuſe for ſo hard an heart, which relents not under ſuch indulgent goodneſs, but fruſtrates all the methods of divine grace and patience? No wonder it is added of ſuch, that they are treaſuring up wrath againſt the day of wrath.

(3.) IN-

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(3.) INFIDELITY is at the bottom of impenitency.

IT cannot be imagined that he, who firmly believes thoſe terrible things of tribulation and anguiſh on them who do evil, can be ſo indifferent, whether or at what time he gets ſafe from them. No, faith would move their fear, as it did *Noah*'s *Heb.* xi. 7. when he prepared the ark; but let the moſt tremendous account be given of eternal horrors, the word preached will not profit, if it be not mixed with faith in the hearers, nor will it be much conſidered.

IT is well if we do not wrangle about the philoſophy of future torments, what is their nature, how much of metaphor is in the account given of them, what their duration, *&c.* till at laſt we doubt of the thing it ſelf: And yet beſides the ſtrong evidence to this point in the goſpel, which is founded on theſe important articles of an heaven and hell, it is part of the law written in mens hearts, *Rom.* ii. 15. The pompous circumſtances of the judgment day, and ſome moving deſcriptions of the puniſhments to be inflicted are peculiar to the goſpel, but not the thing itſelf, that there ſhall be a day of retributions.

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LET us therefore beware of languor in our faith; this ſhould make ſuch ſtrong repreſentations of future miſery attendant on the wicked, that by dwelling on them it may warm our paſſions, and make us ſtartle at the thought of going hence in an impenitent ſtate.

THIS leads me to make an application of the foregoing diſcourſe.

I. Let us be duly ſenſible of our great advantage, to whom this ineſtimable favour of God is yet extended.

1. IN that we are admitted to repentance, as the ſure way to acceptance, after all our grievous offences.

WHEN we conſider the dreadful majeſty and perfect purity of the ſupreme being, and with what terrible vengeance he has declared his wrath from heaven againſt the unrighteouſneſs of men; when we conſider alſo the infinite diſtance we are at from him the Lord of heaven and earth, and the great indignity and affront offered to his glorious excellency by every preſumptuous violation of his laws; when duſt and aſhes, worms that are nothing and vanity, dare for mere humour or very trifling temptations

tations controul his authority and diſpute his dominion, preferring a brutal luſt to the dictates of his infinite wiſdom, and bid defiance to his almighty anger; one would think, that upon the firſt reflexion he ſhould ſink down into deſpair, as *Nabal*, when ſober, at the relation of *David*'s reſentment of his provoking contempt, *His heart died within him.* 1 *Sam.* xxv. 37. SERM. III.

ONE would think it natural, after the committing ſome great crime, to account our ſelves loſt and undone, and like *Cain*, *Gen.* iv. 14. to run about with ſelf-condemning anguiſh, crying, *Surely he will meet me and ſlay me*; I ſhall find no place for ſafety, but one day ſhall periſh for this wickedneſs: But then the remembrance of his infinite goodneſs corrects this thought, and we find after all that we have done amiſs there is forgiveneſs with him on the reaſonable terms of ſubmiſſion and amendment.

HUMAN governments know no ſuch method; the man, who is once guilty of a capital crime, has not the offer of eſcaping by repentance; but the great ruler and judge of all proclaims theſe gracious terms, *Iſai.* lv. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and return unto*

SERM. III. *unto the Lord; and he will have mercy upon him.* What can we say less than as follows? ver. 8. *That his ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.*

LET us not think it hard, that we are called to repentance, and to part with our forbidden pleasures, and that we cannot be saved without it; for rightly consider'd it is a great favour, that they who cannot escape as innocent, may yet escape as pardoned penitents.

2. IT is a great blessing, that we are yet within time for this repentance, which it is to be feared some of us yet stand absolutely in need of, and which might easily have been lost and over.

PERHAPS you may remember the sickness or the peril, which had nearly given a conclusion to your space for repentance, when yet you had not repented; but God not willing you should perish spared you longer, and your eyes yet behold that pleasant sight, the things that belong to your peace. Oh what a price is put into your hands! Methinks there is a joyful sound and sense in those words of St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* vi. 2. which he utters with an air of pleasing triumph, *Behold now is the accepted*

accepted time, behold now is the day of ſalvation. As if he ſhould ſay, Now is the day, now the happy ſeaſon for us, who have ſouls to ſave, let us know and rejoice in our privilege. SERM. III.

WHETHER we have yet been ſerious in our repentance and return'd to our duty or not, ſtill it is ſo far our great comfort, that we have yet the opportunity of doing it. Bleſſed be God, we are not irrecoverably loſt, we are not in their ſad eſtate, for whom there remains nothing but the fearful expectation of judgment; who muſt no more hear thoſe reviving words, *Now is the day of ſalvation.* What is it makes the difference between them and you, if ſtill unreclaimed ſinners, but this, that you have ſtill ſpace to repent, but theirs is loſt and gone; you may repent to advantage and with hope, they only in deſpair and in vain: If you fear the wrath to come, you may flee from it, they muſt endure it: Be therefore gratefully ſenſible what a favourable opportunity is continued to you, whether you make uſe of it or not.

II. LET us then beware we loſe not the benefit of all this goodneſs by letting our time of

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of repentance ſlip away unimproved, which will never return more.

You ſee by example there is great danger of it, ſo many have died impenitent, and with living ſinners there is ſuch a deferring and delaying the buſineſs, as bodes very ill. It is an awful thought, that we muſt every one ſhortly meet our God in judgment, and receive according to our doings; it therefore highly concerns us to conſider and reflect what they have been, how we have led our lives, and behaved towards God and man in the ſeveral ſtages and various relations of life. If we have for the time paſt ſerved divers luſts and pleaſures, and minded only earthly things, if we have lived without God in the world, without hope, or faith, or great concern for the future life, while the fleſh has had the ruling diſpoſal of our hearts, our thoughts, our time, our ſubſtance and all; if we have lived in uncleanneſs or intemperance, in oppreſſion or fraud, in malice or envy; if our hearts upbraid us with any evil way or the neglect of any duty, let us begin in earneſt, if it is yet to begin, to walk in newneſs of life; let godly ſorrow work repentance, and let this bring forth fruits meet for it; let your companions know

know they muſt no longer expect the ſame converſation, the ſame evil language as before; ſay to them, God has given me ſpace to repent of my fornication, my vanity, and wickedneſs, and this I am now reſolved to do. SERM. III.

IT may be you have obtained time on your promiſe of this on a ſick bed, or in ſome imminent danger, as the Pſalmiſt *Pſal.* xxxix. 13. *Oh ſpare me that I may recover ſtrength before I go hence and be no more.* Remember you have had a fair ſpace already, perhaps you have had theſe vices and ſins many years ago, which ſhould have been long ſince renounced and abandoned, but yet they are ſtill with you: Alas! a little more delay and all will be ſpent and gone.

IN order therefore to perſuade you to make uſe of the preſent opportunity I would offer theſe few conſiderations to your thoughts.

1. CONSIDER this time will quickly be run out, it is not in our own hands or power; in vain do we ſay this or that we will do, for we know not what ſhall be on the morrow, *Jam.* iv. 13, 14. This day perhaps may be our laſt, and to-morrow may never come. Beſides repentance is a work, that requires ſpace and time to accompliſh; it is not a tranſient

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ſient haſty thought, but a ſettled and habitual courſe; it is not the work of a moment to be done in an hurry; ſuch a performance muſt be very imperfect, unproved, and unſafe at beſt: Beware then of putting it off to a dying hour, leſt then you ſhould have no better comfort than dying *Berengarius*, who, tho' he had ſome hope he might be ſaved, yet ſtill feared he might be damned: Theſe are ſad ventures to run of a precious ſoul and and an awful eternity.

2. CONSIDER how inexcuſable will ſuch ſinners be at laſt; how little to object againſt God's righteous ſentence. How juſt is the irrecoverable ruin of an irrecoverable ſinner? What can be ſaid where there is neither innocence nor repentance after ſuch a ſpace given? Thou canſt not ſay it was by ſurprize, ſince after ſo many opportunities of reflexion, ſo many invitations thou ſtill refuſedſt to return: No, it was thy ſettled choice, thou waſt ſenſual, earthly, unjuſt, *&c.* and ſuch thou reſolvedſt to be; forty years long was I grieved by thee, go then abandoned to repent with deſpair, who would not repent in hope. How bitter will ſuch reflexions be? How wilt thou bear the reproaches of thine own mind? Re-

member in thy life-time thou hadſt ſpace and days to repent, but thou repentedſt not: Then indeed thou mayeſt repent, but out of ſeaſon, and with repentance of another kind, not virtuous nor voluntary, but forced and penal, not the amendment of repentance, but only the ſorrow of it. SERM. III.

How light ſoever you may make of it now, yet when you ſhall ſtand on the confines of another world, and all the amuſements of this ſhall vaniſh away as a dream, when that tremendous day ſhall dawn, and all ſhall throng in mighty concourſe to the tribunal of their awful judge, expecting their ſentence for life or death eternal; then with anguiſh of heart and tears of blood you would, but cannot obtain what now, if you will, you may ſecure by turning away from your ſins, and thereby ſave your ſouls alive.

SERMON



SERMON IV.

Practical immorality worse than speculative infidelity *.

1 TIM. v. 8.

But if any provide not for his own, and especillay for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

THE crime, which the Apostle here reflects on, is so much short of that horrid contrivance, which this day brings to our minds; A design to blow up the prince, nobles, and gentry of a nation at once, an whole kingdom in epitome, is such

* Preached at *Barbican*, *Nov.* 5. 1722. soon after the great and sudden fall of S. Sea-Stock, which had occasion'd much discontent and ill humour in the nation, to which the latter part of this discourse alludes.

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an inſtance of cruelty, ſo far beyond the unnatural neglect of the ſupport of our private houſhold, our parents, or children, that it ſeems too mild to put it but under the ſame cenſure. But I deſign ſomething more than to cenſure this wicked practice of our enemies, and to ſhow how odious all practices againſt natural juſtice, charity, and humanity are in the moſt orthodox believer, or rather who is not to any good purpoſe ſuch, having practically denied the faith. *Tit.* i. 16.

THE argument in my text warrants me to tell you this for a truth, *That an honeſt charitable and good-natur'd pagan is better than a cruel inhuman miſchievous Chriſtian, tho' never ſo ſound a ſpeculative believer*; for the Apoſtle ſpeaks of perſons eſteemed as ſuch.

INDEED it is well the Apoſtle has directly ſaid it, elſe ſome fierce contenders for the faith would hardly endure it, and might be ready to call me an advocate for infidelity, for Deiſts, and Atheiſts; No, I am not offering an apology for unbelievers in *Jeſus Chriſt* the Son of God, but on the contrary the very compariſon in ranking ſuch bad Chriſtians below

low infidels carries ſufficient evidence, that it is a great reproach to be an infidel, and his condition very unhappy, as *Ephe.* ii. 12. 2 *Cor.* vi. 14, 15. ſhow this Apoſtle's ſenſe to be. And I think it the glory and excellency of Chriſtianity, that it is ſo free from all partiality and connivance to its votaries and corrupt profeſſors, and ſo pure and juſt in its meaſures, as always to pronounce him the *beſt* man, who is and doth *beſt*, tho' an alien and infidel, and him the *worſt*, who is and doth *worſt*, tho' he ſays he is a Chriſtian. By this our great maſter tells the world his religion lies not ſo much in right notions and opinions, as in a pure heart, divine diſpoſitions, and virtuous actions; a doctrine according to godlineſs, righteouſneſs, and charity, without which effect the main end of truth, and its greateſt glory is loſt: He diſclaims all bad actions, and all ſuch as act them under his badge, and will have them degraded of the honour of Chriſtians as none of his, but deniers of his faith. SERM. IV.

IN ſpeaking to this ſubject I ſhall inquire

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I. WHAT are the faults, which come within this grievous cenſure.

II. UPON what accounts ſuch, as are guilty of them, are eſteemed worſe than infidels.

I. WHAT are the faults, which come within this grievous cenſure. From the ſingle inſtance in the text, as from a ſample, we may be directed to extend it to others of the ſame nature, and which come within the reaſon of the cenſure paſt on this.

1. ALL groſs crimes againſt the current approved ſenſe and light of nature, ſuch as the ſober heathens uſually abſtained from, or committed againſt the remonſtrances of their own conſciences: Such was the crime of neglecting to ſupport their parents; with them, if to revere the gods was their firſt and great commandment, the ſecond and like to it was to honour their parents; and ſuch were ſome other crimes againſt the dignity of human nature, and againſt the rules and bonds of ſociety, as murder, perjury, betraying and ruining their country, and the like.

THE wiſe former of the ſpirit of man within him has ſubjected him to very powerful reſtraints

ſtraints of conſcience from what groſly vilifies his nature, as a reaſonable and as a ſociable creature, from what is fatal to the community, whether by a criminal indulgence of his paſſions or luſts: Hence the Apoſtle ſays of one ſort of uncleanneſs in the inceſtuous Chriſtian at *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* v. 1. that it was not known among the Gentiles, as licentious as they were; ſuch an one was therefore to be diſowned, as in that reſpect worſe than an infidel. SERM. IV.

2. MORE particularly it concerns all groſs violations of the bonds of common juſtice, charity, or humanity: There was ſomething of juſtice and gratitude mixed with tender affection and benevolence in the caſe of providing for a man's own; God the original good making man for an image of himſelf ſtampt very deep impreſſions of his goodneſs and benignity on him towards his fellows; goodneſs and tenderneſs is ſo much his nature, that it is currently ſtyled humanity, and as if it was as diſtinguiſhing a character as reaſon; when he loſes this goodneſs and compaſſion, he is ſtyled inhumane.

ORDINARILY men feel ſuch grateful ſenſations and pleaſant raptures in acts of com-

SERM. IV. paſſion to a miſerable brother, and naturally ſhrink ſo at the ſight or hearing of what is very tragical, that it is to be hoped it is ſo deeply planted in human nature, as never to be loſt with the generality of mankind; for tho' we read of ſome, *Rom.* i. who were *without natural affection*, yet it was ſaid of the worſt ſort, when abandoned of God: And if common humanity be put off by any Chriſtians inſtead of putting on the bowels of mercy, ſuch inſtead of being the elect of God are worſe than aliens and ordinary infidels. What muſt we think then of thoſe, who engage in bloody maſſacres, ſlaughters and burnings?

II. I COME in the ſecond place to inquire upon what accounts ſuch, as are guilty of theſe faults, ſhould be eſteemed worſe than infidels,

1. BECAUSE, as has been ſuggeſted, their actions are materially in themſelves worſe than the practices of infidels ordinarily are; the ſober part of them do by nature the things contained in the law, ſays St. *Paul*, *Rom.* ii. They had their monſters in wickedneſs too as well as Chriſtians, and I don't ſuppoſe it was here intended to compare theſe corrupt Chriſtians to the worſt of infidels, but to the ordinary ones and of common rank; and this

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was reproach and ſhame enough to a Chriſtian, to be worſe than a common heathen, and as bad as the worſt; and yet if but as bad as theſe, he is ſtill worſe in another reſpect, becauſe SERM. IV.

2. HE acts the ſame crimes under the advantages and obligations of an excellent religion to do better. Chriſtianity has called him out of darkneſs into marvellous light, and taught him to know his Lord's will in plain and eaſy characters. It propoſes nobler heights of virtue, alluring him by a beautiful endear'd example and magnificent rewards, and warning him of the peril of dreadful miſery, if he walk not becoming his vocation as a new creature in *Chriſt Jeſus*, as led by the ſpirit into purity, righteouſneſs, and charity.

IF he be cruel or perfidious, love violence and oppreſſion, be unpeaceable and domineering, full of ſtrife and contention, he is ſo againſt the cleareſt light, againſt the mind of his maſter, who was ſo meek and lowly in heart, againſt the very ſpirit and ſoul of Chriſtianity, and its ultimate deſign, which is love and kindneſs to all. Whatever they who are without do, if any called a brother be ſuch, be a railer, or extortioner,

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injurious in word or deed, let him be treated as the worse 1 *Cor.* v. 11. The consequences of a Christian's misbehaviour in the offices of humanity and brotherly kindness are far more mischievous than in an infidel, as it thereby sinks the honour and reputation of Christ and his religion, and raises an abhorrence of them in the minds of inconsiderate men.

THERE is nothing Christianity is more intent about, and lays more stress upon, than to endear men to each other in mutual love and confidence, to abolish hatred, envy, and injurious cruelty. For this it exerts all its authority, all its allurements, and its most moving arguments and persuasions. This is the final issue intended by all its laws, 1 *Tim.* i. 5. the centre in which all other duties terminate, for it is the law and the prophets; of virtues it is the most eminent, 1 *Cor.* xiii. it is better than faith, *Jam.* ii. 19. it is more excellent than worship or sacrifice. A devil may believe orthodoxly *Jam.* ii. 19. or may worship, but not have charity or goodness. If then it have not this efficacy upon our minds, to sweeten us into benignity and tenderness, to put away all wrath and mischievous inclinations to harm or destroy others, it is baffled

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and defeated in its main end, in its chief ſtrength and glory, and no amends can be made to repair the injury, pray and worſhip and believe never ſo much. SERM IV.

BUT above all it is thus, when Chriſtians abuſe their religion, and make it the motive and pretext to excite and colour over their unnatural miſchievous practices; this is worſe than poſitive infidelity, but yet ſo it ſeems it oft is, *John* xvi. 3. and probably the inceſt blamed by St. *Paul* 1 *Cor.* v. 1. aroſe from the Jewiſh doctrine of the ceaſing of all natural relations in the proſelytes: However this very crime in my text was made a part of religion with ſome, *Mat.* xv. 5. but our Lord ſhews his deteſtation of the practice, and tho' they had devoted their gift to God, it was ſo far from being ſacred in that ſenſe, that it ſeemed rather ſacrilegious to take it from their parents.

BUT none have charged more, or more vile inhumane deeds to the ſcore of religion, than our adverſaries of the *Romiſh* church. Such a ſpirit of tyranny and cruelty, ſuch bloody and deſtructive principles, ſuch horrid and inhumane practices, ſo aggravated, ſo repeated, ſo juſtified, I think and hope are

no

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no where elſe to be found. Should we trace them through their holy wars, their holy inquiſition, their treacherous maſſacres executed, and others plotted and deſigned, their open perſecutions in ſlaughters and flames, in exiles and priſons, gallies and dungeons: Should we count the millions they have ſlain and tormented without other provocation than that of differing in ſome articles of faith, merely for propagating their own religion, it would make one grieve at heart; yet theſe things have been numbred among the virtuous religious acts done for the honour and intereſt of Chriſt.

HAD the bleſſed *Jeſus* commiſſion'd his diſciples to be generals or military officers inſtead of Apoſtles, had he given them in charge to ſlaughter and ravage all, who would not own their maſter, and perſecute and torture all, who did not profeſs to believe in him, ſuch cruel methods had been conſiſtent: But when himſelf declared, he came not to deſtroy mens lives but to ſave them, and rebuked that cruel ſpirit in his diſciples; when he ſent them out as ſheep among wolves, not to ſtrive or uſe violence, furniſh'd only with patience and humility, with compaſſion to the

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ſouls and bodies of men, to exhort and perſuade, and intreat them to be wiſe, at the peril indeed of being undone for ever, if they refuſed, but no more to be done by his diſciples, than to ſhake off the duſt of their feet and leave them; that any, I ſay, ſhould act ſo croſs and contradictory, and yet have the confidence to place this to the religion which forbids it, is aſtoniſhing, and plainly proves them worſe than infidels; for when did Pagans ſuch things purely for their particular cuſtoms or idols? or what compariſon in their crimes, if they had ignorantly, and in unbelief? SERM. IV.

BUT yet I am willing to hope there are many, who are not come out of *Babylon*, that yet ſee her ſins in this reſpect; but the church is not like to ceaſe her tyranny, but wherever her authority or influence will reach, it is to be expected in attempts to overturn kingdoms by depoſing kings, and abſolving ſubjects from their allegiance, and to puſh their own princes upon extirpating the proteſtant religion by ſevere perſecutions. We are told that King *Henry* the 4th of *France* informed K. *James* of the deſign of this day, and it is ſuſpected the Jeſuits rage for this became

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came fatal to him; ſo dangerous it is, when any are of a better mind, to oppoſe the torrent.

I grant they have ſome alleviations by retorting on proteſtants ſomething of this inhumanity in their perſecutions of others for conſcience ſake; and indeed, unleſs ſomething be allowed to the times when ſuch deſtructive principles were too generally in vogue, (having been ſo long in popiſh darkneſs, that at the firſt coming into the light they could not ſee very clearly,) I have no apology to make for what greatly needs one.

QUEEN *Elizabeth* had loſt no glory, if it had not been found in the annals of her reign, that any had been burnt for mere religion and opinions, to the grief of good Mr. *Fox*, who had ſo great abhorrence of Queen *Mary*'s cruelty in his book of martyrs, that he wiſhed the papiſts had the monopoly of making martyrs, and wrote a moving latin epiſtle to Queen *Elizabeth* to divert the execution of a ſentence for burning two in *Smithfield* for erroneous opinions; but alas he could find no place for repentance in her, not ſo much as to change burning for a milder death. The next reign was not free. And as for the reſt I wiſh papiſts had abated as much

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as others, and we would abate our accuſation due to their cruel obſtinacy. SERM. IV.

BUT if any proteſtants retain their principles and ſpirit, let them ſhare in the infamy, and be ſilent on this day, for the difference will not be very wide as to principle; if it be merit to ſlay one for no cauſe but not judging as we, then it will be more to ſlay numbers, and if ſingly at a ſtroke, why not burn or blow up many in an houſe in a quicker eaſy way?

Of what has been ſaid we may make the following uſes.

1. THEN Chriſtianity ought not to bear the blame of theſe enormous crimes, tho' in profeſſed believers: you ſee it condemns, nay it diſowns them. Other religions careſs and entertain thoſe as allowed friends, who receive their notions, their rites, and ceremonies, tho' wicked and baſe in their practices. The *Jews* eſteem one circumciſed tho' a breaker of the moral law, *Rom.* ii. 25. and ſo the *Mahometans* a muſſulman, and they account others as unclean and as dogs; but the holy *Jeſus* owns none for his favourites merely for their faith, or baptiſm, or reſpect to him, who depart not from iniquity; no, he

accounts

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accounts them as deniers of his faith, he knows them not; the matters in which nature and religion agree being greater than those, in which they are distinguished: He approves the charitable just infidel as the better man, tho' not a Christian. Religion, as well as reason, may be abused to make men worse, but that is no argument against its being excellent in its own nature.

2. LET us humbly lament it that Christianity has suffer'd so much dishonour, as to have so many believers worse than infidels in their cruelty and uncharitableness.

OUR enemies have not only hurt those whom they have oppressed, but have brought an indelible stain on the Christian religion, have caused the name of Christ to be blasphemed among the gentiles, *Rom.* ii. 24. by their cruel and inhumane methods of propagating their religion. What *Jacob* said of *Simeon* and *Levi* upon their barbarous slaughter *Gen.* xxxiv. 30. may be said of these destroyers, they have made Christianity to stink. What an ill savour has it left among the poor *Americans* after the desolations, the tortures, and slaughters they have suffer'd in order to their conversion? How should this

offence be removed? What ſignifies it to tell them of heaven it ſelf, when the poor creatures are afraid to go thither, leſt they ſhould meet any Chriſtians there, well knowing there can be no happineſs in any place, where there are ſuch perſons as they have found them to be. SERM. IV.

THERE will be this good uſe to be made of our reflexions on papal practices; When we juſtly cenſure them, let us remember that advice of St. *Paul* 1 *Cor.* v. 2. *not to be puffed up but rather to mourn.* It is too common for men of one party or profeſſion to take pleaſure in upbraiding thoſe of another with the remembrance of their miſcarriages, (who are perhaps aſhamed of them,) as if they were glad they had ſuch faults to reproach them with: This I ſhould not be for doing, if they would condemn themſelves, and not perſiſt in ſuch practices; and even ſtill let us do it with ſenſible grief for the deep wound thereby given to the Chriſtian cauſe and name, whether by them or others.

3. LET us be eſpecially careful not to contribute to this diſhonour of our profeſſion by ſuch practices. Let humanity and benignity, ſo becoming a reaſonable creature made in the

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the image of God, appear in all our conduct and in every ſtation, whether as parents, huſbands, maſters, or the like. Be not unnatural, cruel, and bitter as a terror, where you ought to be a comfort; nor abandon children to want and ignorance without any proviſion for their education or maintenance. As to others abroad beware of a miſchievons zeal for truth itſelf, a zeal without charity, nay without juſtice, full of hatred and wrath, of clamour and reproach, hard cenſures, and unkind offices; that none may think you are the worſe for your religion, or that it has deſtroyed the little remains of good nature, which the common apoſtacy had left; or that while it allows you not to be like beaſts, it ſhould yet permit you to be like devils in wrath and ſlander, in pride and tyranny to them, who will not fall down and worſhip juſt as you do.

In vain do we condemn deiſts and infidels, if we are worſe than they, as we certainly are, if they, void of our faith, are alſo clear of our hurtful paſſions. You may think you have run a man down, when you have anathematized or caſt him out for error or hereſy, and have vilified him to purpoſe by accounting him for an heathen; but then what a wretch

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art thou, who art worſe than he by thy inhumane rage and fury? In public ſtations he, that will not love his country above a bribe or will not ſerve its intereſts at ſome hazard, is worſe than the Pagans, whoſe remarkable zeal in this particular blazes in innumerable inſtances throughout the *Grecian* and *Roman* hiſtories. SERM. IV.

4. LET us be thankful to almighty God, who has ſo oft deliverd this nation from ſuch cruel enemies. Had this fatal plot ſucceeded, what a diſmal ſcene had appeared? The worthy patriots of our country ſcattered in the air, and the pillars being deſtroyed the whole fabric had fallen into confuſion. And yet the terrible ſpectacle of that day would not have been ſo bad, as the laſting conſequences in returning into bondage in *Egypt* ſpiritually ſo called. Bleſſed be the watchful keeper of our *Iſrael*, who brought to light the hidden works of darkneſs.

BESIDES what our fathers have told us, and the law eſtabliſhed in our *Iſrael* for a teſtimony *Pſal.* lxxviii. 5. ſome of our own eyes have beheld this day with joy for another deliverance. When we ſaw a popiſh prince on the throne, encouraged by a neighbouring

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monarch, who had ſpread his terrors to proteſtants abroad, and broke through laws and edicts to the deſtruction of his proteſtant ſubjects at home, who had been his ſupport; When we ſaw terrors round about, bonds and ſhackles preparing for us, laws ſwallowed up by a diſpenſing power, the army model'd and *Iriſh* choſen regiments added thereto, our univerſities, cities, and corporations ſubverted, and then new moulded for ſpecial ſervices; behold in the midſt of the moſt general ſadneſs and dark preſages a ſmall cloud of an hand's breadth ariſes, which ſoon overſpread our hemiſphere; A proteſtant ſmall prince with a few forces attempted our ſuccour, while the mighty monarch of *France* ſtood looking on, and met with ſuch an unanimous welcome, that the whole kingdom was gained almoſt without a blow: Then were we in a dream, and our mouths were filled with laughter, we ſang the praiſes of our God, but we ſoon forgat his works, neither were we thankful nor wiſe to make a right uſe of the price put into our hands. But yet let not the marvellous goodneſs of the Lord be forgot, who hath ſo oft ſhewed ſtrength with his arm, and ſcatter'd the proud in the imaginations

ginations of their thoughts. Many a time may *England* ſay, if it had not been the Lord, who was on our ſide, then they had ſwallowed us up quick, *Pſal.* cxxiv. 12. Bleſſed be the rock of our ſalvation, that he hath not given us up to the wills of our exaſperated enemies, altho' our land be filled with ſin againſt him. SERM. IV.

5. LET us pray and watch, that we may ſtill be delivered from ſuch unreaſonable men, 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 2. not by any imitation of their cruelties, or bearing hard on any, tho' papiſts, who are peaceable in the land: Tho' thoſe ſeem to have the ſlendereſt title to mercy, who ſhow no mercy, yet our rule is not *to do to them, as they would do to us,* but *as we would they ſhould do to us.* But let not us further their evil devices againſt the proteſtant intereſt, nor add iniquity to iniquity, leſt we provoke our rock to ſell us, as unworthy of his protecting care any longer.

IT is not unlikely, that during our preſent diſcontents and diſturbances they are meditating to ſet upon us when ſore and wounded, as *Simeon* and *Levi* did: For the iniquity of our covetouſneſs God has been wroth with us, and by falling into that grievous

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ſnare we are pierced through with many ſorrows. Diſcontents are high and reſentments deep, and there is great danger, leſt ſtrong paſſions puſh us on to wrong methods; but methinks no true proteſtant can ever judge, that a popiſh government will mend us by bringing us into the condition of our brethren in *France*: Sure it cannot be worth the violating our oaths and allegiance to purchaſe ſuch a prize; Our religion and liberties are not ſuch ſmall things, that becauſe we have loſt ſome wealth, we muſt needs in a pet throw theſe after it. But ſurely looſeneſs in principles and practice, neglect of religion and common morality, the bands of all ſociety, juſtice, truth, faithfulneſs to the truſt repoſed in us, and love to the community, our inſatiable avarice and ſelf-ſeeking (the riſe of all injuſtice, extortion, and treachery,) lay us open to the arts of our enemies and the wrath of God: From this therefore keep yourſelves pure.

LET us pray to God to direct our king, that he may rule us in the integrity of his heart, that our nobles and ſenators may be repairers of our breaches, and may know and purſue the things that make for our peace, that

that the extremity of our danger may add ſe- SERM.
rioufneſs to their counſels, and public ſpirited- IV.
neſs to their deſigns, that at laſt we may be-
hold many earneſt lovers of their country,
preferring *Jeruſalem* to their chiefeſt joy,
true to the king and to the public, as they
would wiſh others to be to themſelves, that
avarice and ambition, corruption and bribery
may not be as a moth and rottenneſs to con-
ſume us, nor the god of this world, un-
righteous mammon, may not blind their
eyes, leſt we be quite loſt, if in this criſis we
ſee not our true intereſt: Not, that we have
not a God mighty to ſave, but becauſe we
are no longer worthy to be the objects of
that ſignal care, of which this day we have
expreſſed, and I hope will long retain a grate-
ful remembrance.

SERMON V.

True Happineſs not to be found in any earthly enjoyment.

ECCLESIAST. ii. 20.

Therefore I went about to cauſe my heart to deſpair of all my labour, which I took under the ſun.

IF we were but ſo ſagacious beforehand, as to perceive what experience will certainly teach us afterwards, as to the vanity in expecting much ſatisfaction from every worldly condition; or had we the wiſdom to improve the experience of others before us, and to hearken to their counſel, who, being deluded with the like inclinations and conceits as our ſelves, have made the dangerous

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but fruitleſs experiment, it would tend much to our happineſs, and we ſhould act a very wiſe part by beginning where they ended, and where we ourſelves ſhall end at laſt, if we will venture to make the ſame trial; we might prevent a great deal of folly and miſery; we might be quiet and contented in this life without aſpiring to happineſs here, and more effectually purſue and provide for ſuch real happineſs in the life to come: Whereas by cheriſhing great expectations and deſires of making ourſelves happy in this world, far beyond what an humble contentment with food and raiment convenient can make us, we are in huge danger of never being happy at all, diſappointed of what we ſought here but could not find, and excluded from the other, which we might have found, becauſe we did not ſeek it in the firſt place; and ſo by labouring for the meat that periſheth, loſe that which endureth to eternal life.

MY deſign therefore now is to perſuade you to take up *Solomon*'s reſolution, never to cheriſh any great opinion of the beſt-contrived condition or circumſtances in this world; not to delude your ſelves by great expectations of the moſt promiſing ſcenes, which may lie in your

your view; never to imagine, that if you could compaſs ſuch a deſign, could ſettle in ſuch a condition, or make ſuch an alteration, then you ſhould have your hearts deſire and might call your ſelves bleſſed. It is our wiſdom to give up all ſuch hopes, and to quit all ſuch attempts as vain, and to ſit down under this conviction, that after all our wiſhes, our projects, our care and toil, nay after all our ſucceſſes too, which may attend them, we ſhall not be much nearer to true ſatisfaction, than we were before; we muſt ſtill be content to bear many wants, many inconveniences, nay many burdens; and that contentedneſs may ſerve us as well, and perhaps be more practicable in our former inferior, if not extreme condition.

To this end let us ſeriouſly conſider theſe inſtructive words of *Solomon*, and the reaſons by which he was led to this change of his diſpoſition implied in the word *therefore*, that is, becauſe of the things he had before related, namely his many labours and arts uſed to attain a condition, which he could never be maſter of in all the various turns of life. This leads us to look back into the precedent part of this book.

In

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IN the beginning the preacher ſets himſelf to give an account of his caſe, but with an heart ſo full, and ſo burden'd with the ſenſe of his folly and diſappointments, that he could hold no longer, but in his very firſt words gives vent to his wearied mind by burſting forth into a paſſionate exclamation, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Like a man who had been travelling abroad on ſome great diſcoveries, at his return his friends flock about him to hear his report, and he cries out at his firſt approach *No ſucceſs!* I am come back as I went, only wearied and diſappointed.

HE goes on to tell us chap. i. ver. 12. how he was qualified, if any man ever was, to find out what would give a man ſolid ſatisfaction on this earth. He was a king of great eſtate and power, great wiſdom and capacity, great experience added to it, and great application in the inquiry, purſuing after happineſs in every turn and corner, where he might hope to meet with it, ſhifting the ſcene from one ſtage to another, and running through the whole circle of earthly delights, where there was any promiſing appearance. He alſo acquaints us with ſome of the particular

eſſays

eſſays and trials he had made. He had tried knowledge, mirth, pleaſure, and all manner of diverſions and accommodations, whatever wealth and power could furniſh, or wit could contrive, or fancy prompt to; and yet all was clogged with ſuch deficiencies, ſuch croſſes, and ſore travail, that he laments all his labour, and tells us in the text, that he came to this concluſion to deſiſt, in utter deſpair of ever finding ſolid ſatisfaction in any circumſtances of this life.

HENCE we may learn this uſeful inſtruction, *That a wiſe and conſiderate man will eaſily ſee reaſon to give up all hopes of finding ſolid and full ſatisfaction in any portion or lot, which this preſent world can afford.*

THIS muſt be our concluſion at laſt, unleſs we be always fooliſh and miſerable, and the ſooner we come to it, the happier ſhall we be. I know men are tempted, as *Solomon* was, with flattering hopes, that in this and the other ſituation they ſhould be completely happy, and probably had rather follow his example, than truſt his experience or report; but as they will certainly find it true in the event, ſo may they come to the knowledge of it ſooner by conſidering the nature

of

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of all theſe preſent goods, which are imagined to be the proper ingredients of this happineſs.

IF we will not be moved with *Solomon*'s authority and example, let us attend to the grounds and reaſons of it, and take into our view ſome of thoſe conſiderations, which diminiſh'd his eſteem and hope, and cool'd his deſires; that they may have the like effect on us.

I. THE firſt conſideration, we are to take into our view, is the great labour and fatigue, which attends the purſuit of this imaginary prize.

THIS is what *Solomon* often regrets chap. i. ver. 8. *All things are full of labour*, labour and travail run through every ſcene. Let our ſcheme be what it will, by which we propoſe to raiſe our ſelves unto happineſs, it will ſurely coſt us this to attempt it, whether we ſucceed or not. If wealth or grandeur be our aim, what pains does it coſt us to attain it? running from ſea to ſea, ſitting up late and riſing early, in wearineſs and toil, in perils and care. If fame or glory be ſought, with what hazard are thoſe atchievements performed,

performed, which muſt gain it? If preferment and advanced ſtations, as thinking we ſhall then ſit eaſy, when we can overlook our neighbours, what difficulties, ſtrife, envy, and oppoſition muſt we expect to meet with in the ſcramble of ſo many competitors, where many run, but one only obtains? If with a more noble ambition we aſpire after knowledge, and think to be happy in retreating from the world, from ſeeking riches or honour as too mean a prize, and which, if *Solomon* had not done it, one would hardly have mentioned on this occaſion; if we think, I ſay, to gain our end of happineſs by retiring to ſpeculation and natural philoſophy and the improvements of arts and ſciences, yet here we find much ſtudy is a wearineſs of the fleſh, and with pain it is we creep firſt from letters to ſyllables, then to words, and thence to things: So that whatever we account to be the goodly prize, which would make us happy, you ſee we muſt run hard, if we will obtain it. This is one diſcouragement to take off the edge of our deſires and expectations to be happy here, but this is the leaſt. We are content to take pains, provided it be for a good reward, and to climb up the hill with

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labour,

SERM. V. labour, if we may but gain the pleaſant proſpect we expect and deſire; but here alſo we ſhall be diſappointed, for

II. WE are to conſider the vanity and emptineſs of all theſe deſirable things, when in great meaſure we have attained them. They prove ſo little, and ſo deficient in goodneſs, that they do not ſatisfy nor pleaſe, and we have ſcarce mended our condition by them.

Solomon had all the materials in his poſſeſſion, but complains, *all is vanity*, yea *vanity of vanities*, again and again, that is, they were exceeding vain, deſtitute of all ſolid excellency to anſwer man's great deſires, or give any great addition of ſatisfaction. We open our mouths wide, but all we take in does not fill them chap. v. ver. 10. chap. vi. ver. 7. the man cannot tell what he wants, yet feels he wants very much. Many things in the expectation appear very inviting, and we are apt to think, that if we could gain ſuch a point, could accompliſh ſuch a deſign, or riſe to ſuch a degree, we ſhould ſurely be well, and would wiſh for nothing more; but if providence indulge us with ſucceſs,

and

and give us our own deſire, as *Pſal.* lxxviii. 29. we find the enjoyment does in no wiſe anſwer the expectation. We have more capacities to take in than the beſt objects here have of good to ſupply them with, more affection to employ than they can entertain, the bed is too ſhort, we have not room enough to extend our ſelves, or the objects have not charms enough to draw our delight to a degree which may ſatisfy; we find the graſp of our minds is not fill'd any more than our arms with embracing a cloud; at a diſtance they look big, but when we come up with them, they almoſt vaniſh, ſo that we are neither ſatisfied with them, nor without them. When we want them we are in pain, when we poſſeſs them, in diſappointment: While we find difficulties in the way, and we fear we cannot gain them, we have a mighty value and deſire for them; when the difficulty is over, and we ſee them in our power, our value is gone, and we grow cold and indifferent, as if nothing made them deſirable, but the difficulty which gives us the trouble, and with that the pleaſure is gone too: Thus are we fooliſhly diſquieted in vain, and weary our ſelves for very vanity *Iſai.* xlix. 4. Let

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a man enjoy all this world's goods, yet if he enjoy not ſomething beyond them, it is not enough: Or ſuppoſe a man does find ſome delightful reliſh of his portion, yet it is ſo faint, ſo ſcanty a ſatisfaction, that a very little want or croſs deſtroys it all. Is it then poſſible to be happy in ſuch a narrow ſphere, in ſuch defective little things? No, all is vanity.

III. ALL theſe earthly comforts, beſides their being defective in goodneſs, are mixt and burden'd with many attending evils: In the one reſpect they are *vanity*, in the other *vexation of ſpirit*. They are grapes that grow on thorns, and, as we ſay, the greateſt conveniences have their very great inconveniences, *Solomon* obſerves it.

SUPPOSE a man thinks to be happy in knowledge and univerſal learning, in extending his views beyond the little ſphere of the vulgar, and making great progreſs in arts and ſciences, yet it has ſorrow attending it as well as pleaſure chap. i. ver. 18. He is dunced and poſed with ſo many difficulties, ſo overwhelmed with objections and knots, which he cannot untie, that it frets and tires his mind; beſides which his greater knowledge

oft expoſes him to the odium of the ſlothful and ignorant, who can enjoy their ignorance at a cheaper rate. If he thinks to be happy in jolly mirth and ſenſual pleaſures, in airy diverſions and gay fancies, that mirth in the end will prove but madneſs, chap. ii. ver. 2. in that laughter the heart is ſorrowful; it diſſipates the mind, and leaves an uneaſy damp behind it, chap. vii. ver. 3. If it be in riches and treaſures plentifully amaſſed, alas! this pierces him with ſorrows and cares, makes him a mark for envy, and charges his mind with an heavy weight, chap. v. ver. 12. See how the unhappy man is troubled with the unwieldineſs of his huge poſſeſſions. His large accounts, his projects to improve his ſuperfluous wealth, and his jealouſy of loſing it, render him as a beaſt of burden for others uſe. SERM. V.

IF there be any pleaſure in this world, it is in a friend, who is as our own ſoul, where minds mingle and claſp in fervent endearments; and yet how oft does our friend's folly or miſery pierce us with grievous ſympathy, and put us to pain for him? The tender mother, more than once, travails in pangs for her beloved offſpring. Nay, as valuable as life it-

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ſelf is, yet if a man has much of it, it runs dregs at laſt, it is labour and ſorrow, tireſome and burdenſome, *Job* vii. 16. There is no ſeparating the roſe from its prickles, no comfort unmix'd, but the evil continually allays the good. And do we think to be happy at this rate between the defectiveneſs of comforts, and the evils annexed? It can never be: What cures one evil creates another.

IV. A concurrence of many things is requiſite to complete an earthly happineſs, and without them all our ſatisfaction fails. Our real wants are many, and our deſires various, and there is no one thing can ſatisfy them all, but they require almoſt as many diſtinct remedies.

KNOWLEDGE will not feed us, nor relieve the burdens of poverty; *Solomon* found a *poor* wiſe man, chap. ix. 15. Reputation and fame and friends will not give health: Nor can money, which in common trade is ſaid to anſwer all things, purchaſe either wiſdom, or eaſe from pain, or clear up a dejected ſpirit. There needs as great variety of accommodations to fit our ſeveral wants, as there does of garments to fit our ſeveral members, there is no one compendious univerſal remedy, which

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can alone anſwer all things; it is only the bleſſed God himſelf, who can do this, *Rev.* xxi. 7. SERM. V.

AND tho' it may ſeem eaſy to diſpenſe with ſome one or two ſmall wants, if the great ones be all anſwered, yet ſuch is the nature of a man pampered with proſperity, and eagerly affecting ſenſitive happineſs, that one bitter want remaining ſpoils the enjoyment of all he poſſeſſes, and we uſually regret more the little pleaſure we want, than we enjoy all the reſt. Let *Abraham* be never ſo great, and have greater promiſes, yet *What will you give me, if I go childleſs?* *Gen.* xv. 2. and ſo ſpeaks *Rachel*, *Gen.* xxx. 1. Let *Ahab* have all the kingdom, yet if he want a little convenient ſpot, and cannot have *Naboth*'s vineyard, he lies ſullen on his bed, and cannot eat 1 *Kings* xxi. 4. See a remarkable inſtance in *Haman*, *Eſth.* v. 11. who tho' advanced above all the princes, yet cries *This avails me nothing.* What's the matter? why one particular poor man does not pay him reſpect enough, and ſo he has no enjoyment in all the reſt: How is it poſſible ſuch a trifle ſhould put a man out of humour, who had got ſuch late eminent favours? We may think it ſtrange; but the

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truth is, tho' another could have ſlighted it, yet proſperity is a nice and peeviſh thing; it makes a man wanton, proud, and delicate, and the mind becomes ſo pettiſh, dainty, and humourſome, that the leaſt croſs raiſes an impatient flame, and it can bear nothing; the man is as miſerable in the want of one inſignificant thing, as if he wanted all the reſt. How then ſhould a man ever be happy in carnal delights, which are always ſure to want ſome or other of the many things requiſite to give him full ſatisfaction, and he is never like to have all his wiſhes, when he wiſhes ſo extravagantly?

THERE are ſome evils ſo unavoidable, that no earthly portion can cure or remove them. What are riches and pomp, friends and diverſions to a man burden'd with natural infirmities and diſeaſes? Gold and ſilver are not eyes to the blind, nor feet to the lame, they cannot reſtore ſtrength to the feeble, nor youth to the aged, nor can they give eaſe under acute pains; nay, ſuch an habitual infirmity takes away all the pleaſure of wealth, honour, learning, or power, when all *theſe* can no way remove the anguiſh of *that*. There are many inward diſquietudes and

wounds,

wounds, for which there is no balm, no healing in any external comforts, ſuch as proceed from an unkind relation, a rebellious or unfortunate child, an unhappy ſcene of contention. SERM. V.

BESIDES the compaſſionate miſeries of others there are many times, in which riches profit not, and in which ſhould a man gain the whole world, and ſtill remain under the preſſure of ſuch diſquieting evils, they would avail him nothing; and yet ſome or other of theſe evils are not long to be avoided or eſcaped without almoſt a miracle. What then ſhall make a man happy, when he has no reliſh of all his ſtore, no profit of all his labour under the ſun? So precarious a portion, expoſed to ſo many hazards and interruptions, can never afford perfect quiet and reſt.

VI. THE duration of all the delights in this world are ſo ſhort and periſhing, that no thorough ſatisfaction can ever be obtained in any earthly portion.

IMAGINE them to be much greater than they are, and to have all that is poſſible to be had, yet we cannot forget, that all the glory of man is as the flower of the field; it is now ſweet and gay, but to morrow wither'd

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and neglected. By the time a man has with much labour and pains ſettled himſelf to his liking, he begins to be alarm'd with apprehenſions of parting from all his ſublunary comforts: The fine ſuperſtructure is but juſt raiſed, and in a few years down it falls. He has formed, as he imagines, a brave ſcheme of happineſs, and prepared all materials for putting it in execution, and then his breath goes forth, and all his thoughts periſh: He ſays within himſelf, *Now ſure I ſhall be happy for many years, I will now ſit down and be merry*; but in the midſt of all theſe pleaſant flatteries come the melancholy tidings, *This night thou muſt depart, and then whoſe ſhall all this be? Luke* xii, 20. Death ſweeps the ſtakes, and contracts the large inventory into the few articles of a winding-ſheet and a coffin: Then farewell all dear relations, then all this imperfect knowledge, all the ſkill in arts and ſciences is at an end, he carries nothing away with him, his glory deſcends not after him, naked he came into this world, and naked he goes out of it; nay before that, perhaps thieves break through and ſteal his treaſures, or a public enemy invades them, *Lament.* i, 10.

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Is he happy in agreeable ſociety and dear relations? Does he live joyfully with the wife of his youth and the children of his bowels? Lo! of a ſudden comes death, and makes an heart-rending ſeparation, and tears the beloved object from his embraces with cruel violence; the deſire of his eyes is gone with a ſtroke, and his diſappointed grieved love pains him equal to, or beyond his former pleaſure; and thus is all his worldly happineſs ruined at once. Where now is the bleſſedneſs he once ſpake of? Where is the mountain, which was thought to have ſtood ſo ſtrong, that it could not be moved? How could this man be happy, who had no ſurer portion than this, who could not but fear and ſee this coming with frequent melancholy thoughts, who knew he built all his happineſs upon the ſand, and that great muſt be the fall thereof, whenever the winds ſhould blow and the rains fall?

NAY, if his earthly portion ſhould ſtand firm, and continue long, the man himſelf will at laſt loath and nauſeate it, it will be no longer valuable to him, for *deſire it ſelf ſhall fail*, and then he complains as old *Barzillai*, 2 *Sam.* xix. 35. *Can I diſcern between good*

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and evil? Can thy ſervant taſte what I eat and drink? Can I hear any more the voice of ſinging men or ſinging women? for ſo it is, that all that is in the world paſſeth away, and ſo does all the luſt and reliſh of it, 1 *John* ii. 17.

Now if *every one* does not ſee reaſon to deſpair of being happy here in an earthly portion, yet ſure a *conſiderate* man cannot miſs it! *Solomon*'s concluſion is ſo very obvious, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Let any man ſay from experience, if he can, that he finds any portion here, which is not vanity, any condition, which in a little while does not prove vexation of ſpirit: Let him ſay, whether his mind be not in continual diſquietude, while he is deeply engaged in worldly intrigues, and intent upon the purſuit of ſome imaginary happineſs. What ſtrange and uneaſy paſſions do theſe matters excite in us, which are utterly inconſiſtent with true happineſs?

FROM what has been ſaid,

1. LET us learn this point of wiſdom, as ſoon as may be, namely, *never to expect nor aim at any great ſatisfaction in this world.*

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IT is long before experience it ſelf can convince men of it, altho' ſo plain a caſe. The experience of others ſeldom moves them, who come after *Pſalm* xlix. 13. and not a little of their own will do it, until it has been oft repeated. They are baffled in one deſign and ſcheme, which they thought would do, but then they attempt to do it by another, as *Solomon* did, or repeat the ſame again, fancying that it only wanted better management at firſt: And thus we tire ourſelves in fruitleſs labours and deſires, and have a great deal of folly to lament, which by this wiſdom had better been prevented: It is certainly what we ſhall come to at laſt, and if we would cauſe our hearts to deſpair, uſe a little conſideration, would but improve common obſervations, and commune with our hearts about theſe plain matters, till we are fully convinced of it, it might ſerve us inſtead of coſtly experience.

2. LET us be content with our preſent condition, and never fancy we can make it very much better, if it be but moderately well. We can be truly happy in no condition in this life, let us contrive and ſhift never ſo much, but content and eaſy we may be with reaſonable

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able accommodations; ſome wants and burdens we muſt take up with, let our circumſtances be what they will, ſo that there is no ſuch mighty difference, as we imagine, in the ſeveral conditions of life.

HE who is content and eaſy in his lot, and feels no pinching want, is near upon a level with the greateſt in point of comfort, for they are but content, and he is the ſame, and if more content, then more happy, tho' not ſo great or rich. For after all, he is the neareſt to happineſs, who has the feweſt wants, not who has the largeſt poſſeſſions; and tho' we ſhould gain a great deal more, it is a queſtion whether we ſhould want the leſs; and then ſince the uſe of worldly goods is only to ſupply our wants, what are we the nearer? for I doubt few are ſo eager in their purſuit of riches or power for the ſake of others, as for themſelves. It is much the better from a due ſenſe of the vanity of all things below and the excellency of thoſe above to leſſen our neceſſities by regulating and contracting our deſires within the bounds of our ſupplies, than to enlarge our deſires and increaſe our ſupplies; for as large deſires are apt to grow unruly and

and licentious, and not to be gratified, ſo our content is more effectually ſecured upon the grounds of ſelf-denial by having our deſires under diſcipline, than upon the largeneſs of our fortune, or the advantage of our circumſtances, becauſe theſe are ſlippery and uncertain, and then we loſe our contentment with them; whereas the principles of our mind are more firm, and more in our own power, the one is well fortified and ſecure, the other expoſed to a thouſand caſualties; but for certain it can never be worth while to purchaſe any lot or condition at the expence of a good conſcience, and the hope of future happineſs, which is a much greater treaſure than all the delights this world can afford: Our proſperity, which at laſt will be vanity, will then be vexation of ſpirit; and when viciſſitude or mortality have removed this, what ſhall we then do with an uneaſy and wounded ſpirit?

3. WHAT remains, but that we bear a more conſtant regard to the unſeen ſtate, where alone this true happineſs is to be found, for we are not left without a proviſion ſuitable to our natures, and adequate to our moſt enlarged deſires.

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THE bleſſed God, who made us of his own good pleaſure, made us to be happy, and is as deſirous of our being ſo, as we are ourſelves; not indeed in the ſame way and time, not on this earth ſubject to vanity, accurſed and overſpread with thorns and briars, not according to our haſty impatient deſires in this life, where we neither deſerve it, nor are meet for it; but when we ſhall have approved our fidelity to him by a life of faith, patience, and obedient holineſs in this ſtate of trial, we ſhall then find our heart's deſire accompliſhed. For this purpoſe he has prepared a kingdom, a paradiſe, an inheritance, to which he invites and calls us; when we ſhall have fought the good fight, and finiſhed our courſe, there is laid up a crown in readineſs for us.

IF *here* be only vanity, *there* is fulneſs of joy, which will ſatisfy all our deſires, ſupply all our wants, and eaſe us of all our burdens; no allays or mixture of evil, no viciſſitudes nor mortality, but riches, honour, glory, pleaſure, and friends without end. Hither then let us turn our eyes, if we are in earneſt to be happy, and turn away from theſe vanities. Let us ſet our affections on the things above, let us oft get up to the mount, and view that good

good land during the fatigues and miſeries of this dark wilderneſs; let us preſs forward towards the mighty prize of our high calling with the holy ardor of thoſe, who through faith and patience are gone to inherit the promiſes; and then the well-grounded hope of this will ſuſtain us under all the preſſures and burdens of this vain life: It was the faith in this, which made *Moſes* rich without the treaſures of *Egypt*, great enough without being ſon to *Pharaoh*'s daughter, and happy without the pleaſures of ſin. But in vain do we ſeek for ſatisfaction, if we prefer this world and fleſh before thoſe precious promiſes, if through the impatience of a carnal mind we will waſte our time and thoughts in purſuit of preſent good. If here we place our chiefeſt comfort, we muſt hereafter be tormented, and indeed be neither happy here, nor in the world to come.

BUT I would obſerve further, that tho' complete happineſs is not to be met with in this life, yet ſuch degrees of it, as are here attainable, are likelieſt to be ſecured by true religion, which will enable a good man to be more happy in the poſſeſſion and uſe of a little,

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tle, than the wicked are in their great abundance; for

1. By abating his deſires of earthly things he is chearfully content with a little. We all know, that a man's happineſs lies not in the things without him, but in his mind, and that thoſe are ſought after in order to ſatisfy and content this; he therefore has the better lot, who has in the greateſt degree attained this end; not he who has the moſt, but whoſe remaining neceſſities and deſires are the feweſt. Now religion is the beſt inſtructer in this uſeful leſſon, and the moſt powerful principle of mortification: By this the righteous man beholds the vanity and inſignificancy of worldly things in the trueſt light; the ſtrong impreſſion made on his mind by the things, which are eternal, makes the things of ſenſe and time ſeem very little in that compariſon. There are none of theſe can do him any great ſervice beyond relieving the neceſſities of nature, and with this he is well content; he is crucified to the world, and the world to him; he looks on all the periſhing intereſts of this life with the mortified eyes of a pilgrim and a ſtranger; he is not diſturbed at the ſmall figure he makes in the world, or that he comes not in

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for a larger ſhare of it; he is eaſy under the divine diſpoſal, and remembers it is but a little while he has to ſtay, and that when he goes, he can take nothing away with him; with food and raiment he can be content, and thus godlineſs gives contentment 1 *Tim.* vi. 6. Whereas this may be more than the ungodly can ſay, who proſper in the world, and yet are continually tormented with uneaſy reſtleſs deſires of obtaining more: Inſatiable as the grave they cry *Give, give,* are tired with freſh purſuits, and vexed with new diſappointments; and while they are the envy and admiration of all about them, are yet fretting for want of ſomething, which they have not, without which, like *Haman Eſth.* v. all they have avails them nothing. SERM. V.

2. He enjoys his little with the comfort of a good conſcience, and this always makes a feaſt, tho' he dine on a morſel of herbs; and gives good company, tho' alone. His portion is not from plunder and ſpoil, it is not the fruit of violence and oppreſſion, not the houſes of the widow, which he has devoured, nor the wages of the hireling, which he has with-held: Such are not the righteous, but the wicked, who oft riſe to their great eſtates by injurious

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injurious treacherous methods, by cruel extortion, deceitful bribes, or diſhoneſty in their truſts, by which they make haſte to be rich, but are not innocent. Theſe things give an ill reliſh to all, and diſturb their minds, ſo as the charms of their pomp and mirth cannot lay the evil ſpirit. How much more eaſy he, who with innocency enjoys himſelf in his ſmall portion, the fruit of a bleſſing on his honeſt labour and induſtry.

3. HE enjoys his little with more advantage by his ſober and regular uſe of it, by which means, namely temperance and ſobriety, modeſty and frugality, it goes farther and reliſhes ſweeter than the larger incomes of ſuch, as are prodigal and vain, luxurious and wanton, by which methods, like the prodigal ſon, they out-run their eſtates, as well as their health, in riotous living: By vanity and ambitious projects, by emulation and oſtentation they oft bring themſelves into ſtraits and diſgrace, or by indulging themſelves exceſſively they come to reliſh nothing, and obtain little elſe but a ſhort and unhealthy life.

BUT the righteous man is far better, whom the grace of God hath taught to live ſoberly, and

and walk humbly, not to make his belly his God, nor to make proviſion for the fleſh, but to keep a due diſcipline, by which he who has leaſt, has no want, and he who has much, has nothing to ſpare. So that inſtead of his envying the great pomp and rich dainties of his ſuperiors, they rather may envy the health, ſound ſleep, and good ſtomach of their inferior, who is content with the cheap and eaſy proviſions of nature beyond the coſtly banquets of the riotous, with whom to run to the ſame exceſs is neither fit nor deſirable.

SERM. VI.

I SERMON

SERM.
VI.

SERMON VI.

Holy men from all quarters of the world ſhall meet in heaven *.

LUKE xiii. 29.

They ſhall come from the Eaſt and from the Weſt, from the North and from the South, and ſhall ſit down in the kingdom of God.

SINCE by the providence of God we are likely now to ſeparate and ſcatter, I chuſe to call your thoughts to the contemplation of that great gathering, when

* Preached at the Marſhalſea priſon in *Dublin* July 22, 1705, upon the author's releaſe from thence, where he had been confined above two years for a principle of judgment: The debtors at the ſame time being diſcharged by an act of grace.

SERM. VI. all the ſervants of God ſhall delightfully convene, not for a tranſient interview but an eternal cohabitation. We may go ſome Eaſt and ſome Weſt, but from all quarters God will gather together the prepared heirs of his kingdom: From hence I gather this obſervation,

THAT the holy ſervants of God, however diſperſed and ſcattered into different quarters on earth, ſhall all meet again and ſit down in God's kingdom in heaven.

I propoſe to ſpeak to theſe two general heads.

I. THE ſubject here ſpoken of, *They ſhall come from the Eaſt and from the Weſt, from the North and from the South.*

II. WHAT is here ſaid of theſe diſperſed holy perſons in relation to their future ſociety, *They ſhall ſit down in the kingdom of God.*

I. AS to the firſt general, the ſubject ſpoken of, here are two things to be conſidered.

1. WHO are the perſons intended by this indefinite *They*. It cannot be intended of all univerſally. Alas, how many are there in the world, who will never meet again with their

their holy excellent acquaintance, nor meet comfortably with any in the future ſtate! True indeed all ſhall one day aſſemble at the awful bar of the univerſal judge, righteous and wicked, all generations ſhall appear on that mighty theatre, the oppreſſor and the oppreſſed, the faithful ambaſſadors of Chriſt, and they who would not be perſuaded by them; but as this meeting will afford no pleaſure to the guilty criminals, who will grieve to ſee the witneſſes of their crimes or the accuſers of their follies, ſo neither will it be of any continuance, for preſently a ſeparation ſhall be made between the ſheep and the goats, who ſhall not fold together. The rich man and *Lazarus* may have an interview, but an unpaſſable gulph ſhall for ever divide them: And tho' the wicked ſhall eroud together from Eaſt and Weſt in the ſame woful Tophet, yet will they find no joy in that lamentable ſociety, but on the contrary will be a terror to each other by their mutual revenge and bitter reproaches. But this meeting in the text is for mutual delight and agreeable ſociety, for we find ver. 28. that many intruders ſhall be thruſt out. SERM. VI.

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THE persons therefore here spoken of are all truly religious and holy Christians, who have faithfully served God, and received the Lord Jesus; you may see in the precedent verse, that this is no ordinary attainment, and what many pretenders cannot make out. This is more than crying *Lord, Lord*, giving Christ his titles and standing up for his honour, or offering a few formal prayers. This is more than to wish and cry for salvation at a dying hour; it is more than to eat in his presence, or to have visible communion with Christ and his church; these are the qualifications of the rejected. It is true many flatter themselves confidently on these grounds, but to no purpose so long as they work iniquity, and paint the outside only, whilst they are slaves to the imperious sway of fleshly lusts, or drudges to the world in covetousness and ambition: No treacherous pretenders to faith without holiness, nor loud boasters of devotion to God without justice and love to man shall enter in there. They are only the humble serious mortified Christians, in whose heart the love and fear of God rules against all other motives, whose religion makes them better than their neighbours in their several relations and various dealings, who seriously and earnestly

strive

ſtrive to enter the ſtrait gate with fear and with trembling, as having to do with God both in ſecret and upon the open ſtage, and not only hear and eat in his preſence, but live and act accordingly, and work righteouſneſs at all times; ſuch as were *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*. SERM. VI.

2. THESE are in the mean time ſuppoſed to be diſperſed over the world in all quarters: Some originally *by birth*; that happy congregation will contain ſome of all countries, every nation will ſend ſome members to this great convention, *Rev.* v. 9. *Out of every kindred, tongue, and people.* We need not be curious to inquire how this can be, or whether the goſpel has really been preached in every part, or whether any of thoſe Pagans, who know not the goſpel, can be ſaved; we muſt leave that to the righteous judge of all, who will not judge them by our goſpel law, ſince they have it not, but by that law which they have, the law written in their hearts. It is enough that we are told every country will afford ſome faithful ſervants of God to ſit down in his kingdom; much more every quarter of the world, *Eaſt*, *Weſt*, *North* and *South* ſays the text; and this of their own original production.

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OTHERS are *by accident* driven into all parts. Sometimes on worldly buſineſs, men go from city to city for traffick and merchandize, and know not whether they ſhall ever return more to ſee their dear friends again.

Impiger extremos currit mercator ad Indos.

Like birds of the ſame neſt, ſo are families; when grown up, they diſperſe themſelves different ways, each to provide for himſelf. Or ſometimes by perſecution; thus we read of the primitive Chriſtians *Acts* viii. 1. when there was a great perſecution of the church at *Jeruſalem*, they were all ſcattered abroad; and others, of whom the world was not worthy, wander'd about in ſheep-ſkins and goat-ſkins, in deſerts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, *Heb.* xi. 38. glad to flee from ſavage men to the more merciful beaſts, and leave their acquaintance to go into a ſtrange land for quiet and ſafety: Thus they, who were once aſſociated here, are caſually ſcattered, and die in diſtant countries, but tho' ſeparated in the places of their abode, are yet united in love and hope.

I proceed now in the ſecond place to conſider,

II.

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II. WHAT is here ſaid of theſe diſperſed holy perſons in relation to their future ſociety,

1. THEY ſhall *come together* again to the ſame place and kingdom. Heaven is the place of the general rendezvous, whither the ſaints all ſteer, when ſeparated by any ſtorm, as to the appointed common port. It is a needleſs curioſity to inquire how they get thither, God will take care to accompliſh it, perhaps by a convoy of angels, who know the road; thus *Lazarus* is repreſented to have been conveyed into *Abraham*'s boſom *Luke* xvi. 22. and thus we read *Mat.* xxiv. 31. that angels ſhall at the laſt day gather together the elect from the four winds from one end of the heavens to the other: But whatever way it be, God has promiſed them that good land and given them a right to it, and therefore will certainly bring them to it to inherit it. All of them ſhall come; they, who for diſtance of time or place could not be together in this world, ſhall meet there; they, who by reaſon of death or croſſes could not long continue together here, ſhall meet then for ever: Prophets ſhall then meet with Apoſtles, and Jews with Gentiles; ſheep of divers folds ſhall lie down together in the eternal green paſtures of

SERM. VI. of that heavenly paradiſe, and either recover their loſt acquaintance, or contract one wholly new.

2. THEY ſhall at their next meeting *ſit down.* This implies

(1.) THEIR final reſt in alluſion to a traveller at his journey's end, where he deſigns to ſtay. Till we reach heaven we are wandring pilgrims, and muſt expect no long reſting-place while on our way. We go from ſtage to ſtage, toſs about from place to place, and from one condition to another. If we are never ſo proſperous in this world, yet we have higher ends to purſue, and muſt not long ſtay to enjoy here. He, that ſets up his ſtaff ſaying he ſhall never be moved, ſpeaks vainly, and if he ſit down never ſo ſecurely, he will preſently hear the voice, *Ariſe, go hence.*

NOW in heaven they ſit down, here is their journey's end, they lay by ſtaff and ſcrip and all the troubleſome furniture of this weariſome uncertain ſtate; there they dwell and tarry as at their eternal home; they have found their father's houſe, their relations and inheritance, and now they ſit down to converſe

verſe together for ever without change or ſeparation. SERM. VI.

(2.) THEY may be ſaid to ſit as being at the end of their labour, in a poſture of eaſe and ceſſation. Here they toil and work, they run and fight, they fear and watch, and can take no long reſt; freſh troubles and trials are continually coming upon them, they cannot ſit ſecurely, their taſk and ſafety will not permit it; providence itſelf will diſturb them and find them buſy employment; we muſt work out the day, for we have a great deal to do for God, for ourſelves, and for others. But in heaven they meet to reſt, who before were fellow-labourers and ſufferers; *they reſt from their labours Rev.* xiv. 13. not from active ſervice, but from painful toil and uneaſy difficulties; they have done their work and laid down their burden: Now they may take their reſt, none will diſturb them more, they ſit down quietly, they feel no more pain nor ſorrow, for all tears are wiped away from their eyes.

(3.) THEY ſit down as at a feaſt. The text alludes to a wedding-ſupper v. 25. *Here* they may be forced to take up with mean and ſcanty fare, and eat their ſolitary morſel, the

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the bread of affliction and waters of adverſity, and mingle their tears with their food; or like *Iſrael* in *Egypt* with their ſtaff in their hand, ſcarce able to eat it at leiſure: But *there* they meet in brotherhood at a plentiful feaſt, all of them their heavenly father's gueſts; ſome indeed ſit in higher, ſome in lower places, but all have room and entertainment; *there* they fare deliciouſly upon fulneſs of joy and rivers of pleaſure, and feaſt and rejoice in ſweet harmonious ſociety.

(4.) THEY ſit down in a kingdom, as kings ſeated on their thrones. Thus Chriſt is ſat down at the right hand of God in his throne, and has promiſed, that his faithful ſervants ſhall in like manner ſit down with him in his throne *Rev.* iii. 21. They will meet to be crowned and exalted, to be rewarded and glorified with an eternal weight of glory, which will far outſhine all the grandeur of the greateſt mortal kings. *Here* they were ſtriving and groaning together for the prize, and perhaps parted with many fears and doubts what would be the iſſue, but *there* they ſhall be ſeated in an everlaſting kingdom, in the kingdom of God, where all is ſafe and ſecure; not in men's uneaſy tottering

tottering kingdoms, where violence and diſturbance ſo often enter. SERM. VI.

OF what has been ſaid I ſhall make the following application.

1. THIS may afford matter of delightful contemplation upon the ſeparating of endeared friends. Many ſuch occaſions there be beſides that of death; ſometimes a kind providence ſeparates thoſe, who were linked by troubles only, as is partly the preſent caſe with reſpect to ſome of us; ſometimes unhappy diſſenſions make a *Paul* and *Barnabas* to ſeparate; and ſometimes other occaſions: And tho' they may be very ungrateful, as was the caſe of the *Epheſians* upon St. *Paul*'s leaving them, ſorrowing moſt of all for the words which he ſpake, that they ſhould ſee his face no more *Acts* xx. 38. yet it is a pleaſure to think, that tho' we and our holy friends may be ſcattered to the four winds, we ſhall one day meet again in a better condition than when we parted here. Many a man is by neceſſity forced abroad into diſtant countries, he fears, and his family and friends fear, that he or they may die before his return, and perhaps it proves ſo, and the man is troubled to die at a diſtance from his own relations,

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lations, and ſo are they; but among good men it is in the main much the ſame, for as they never die out of the reach of God's providence, ſo one country is as near heaven as another, where they are to meet again. How may a Chriſtian feaſt on ſuch a raviſhing contemplation!

OUR gathering together unto Chriſt is a very weighty point, as St. *Paul* intimates in obteſting Chriſtians by it 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 1. *Now we beſeech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by our gathering together unto him.* Oh great and glorious ſociety, when the moſt excellent perſons of all ages, and of all quarters of the world ſhall aſſemble! We need not with St. *Auſtin* wiſh to ſee Chriſt in the fleſh or St. *Paul* otherwiſe than here: We have heard of patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, and confeſſors, but then they will come together, and our lamented dear friends will come alſo, and all will ſit down in ſweet delightful ſociety, in love and triumph, free from trouble and want, never to part more by any contention, adverſity, or other occaſion.

NAY why may I not by a figure interpret the words in the text of many, who are as diſtant as Eaſt and Weſt in their ſeveral opinions,

nions, that they ſhall come together, as all good men ſhall, tho' of different ſpeculations, *For in every nation he, that feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs, ſhall be accepted of him, Acts* x. 35. Many, who in their fooliſh cenſorious pride and ignorance diſown one another now, ſhall be both of them owned by their common heavenly Father, who is more merciful than they; altho' nothing offends him more than ſuch uncharitable arrogance in condemning another's ſervants. Unſkilful huſbandmen may raſhly pluck up the wheat with the tares, but God will gather them into his garner. Oh bleſſed ſight, to behold all meeting in love and affection, whom ignorance or uncharitableneſs had here divided unjuſtly! God ſhall annul all their mutual anathemas and hereticating cenſures. SERM. VI.

SIT we down then and think of that day, when the angels ſhall be ſent forth to make this mighty gathering, and none who are ſincere ſhall be left out; behold them flocking from all quarters in innumerable throngs, ſat down, feaſting, and rejoicing together. *Here* they parted with groans and tears, *there* they ſhall meet in joy and comfort; *here* they ſorrowed, that they ſhould ſee each other's faces

SERM. VI. faces no more, *there* they will rejoice, that they ſhall never loſe ſight of them again.

2. THIS ſhould provoke us to diffuſive extenſive love to all good men now every where, ſince they are to be our dear companions hereafter. We ſhall be nearer one day, therefore, let them be Eaſt or Weſt, North or South, we ſhould join in love and agreement, in mutual prayers, and ſympathizing affections. The church myſtical you ſee is of a wide extent, not ſhut up in one quarter, as ſome cenſorious monopolizers would pretend, but diffuſes and extends itſelf to holy men of all places and denominations.

3. LET us all endeavour, that we may meet in this great and glorious meeting, that we may be of the number of thoſe holy practical Chriſtians, who ſhall be admitted to ſit down in that kingdom, for ſad and grievous will it be to be thruſt out; and yet this will be the caſe of many children of the viſible goſpel kingdom.

WE, my brethren, are turn'd abroad into a looſe world, and if there be burdens in adverſities and bonds, there are ſnares in liberty and eaſe. Let us then beware what ſociety we delight in here, a companion of fools

ſhall

ſhall be deſtroyed; companions in cups and pleaſure promote not any fitneſs for that glorious ſociety. If eating and drinking in Chriſt's preſence will not avail, much leſs will doing ſo in a ſenſual courſe without regard to his preſence. SERM. VI.

BEWARE of a ſupine remiſneſs in ſecret duties; religion is not to be kept alive without praying to our father in ſecret: Our troubles ſhould at leaſt teach us to pray more than ever, for this will fetch in help at all times, and more eſpecially in time of affliction. Let trouble be remembred to good purpoſe, that we ſin no more; many grow worſe by having their liberty, and make their ſpiritual bonds more ſtrong. Remember we loſe a great help, if afflictions be not improved, and worſe will follow: There is a priſon, from which no act of grace or favour will deliver for ever.

4. OBSERVE the wiſe methods of God's providence: This is not the place deſigned by God for our fixed abode, but here he trains up his ſervants for their heavenly home; thither he has been gathering his moſt excellent ſervants from time to time, one after another, till all generations be gathered into

SERM. VI. eternity; then the body ſhall be raiſed in glory, and all meet together at the marriage of the lamb.

FINALLY, remember we muſt all ſtand and meet again at a ſolemn place, the bar of the great Judge. Oh that we be not then ſcattered, ſome only for heaven, and others for hell, one taken and another left! That we be not then fellow-ſufferers in the eternal dungeon! That we mind the one thing needful, and be more anxious for ſecuring our ſalvation than for all the comforts of this life! Let us live in conſtant awe of God, and work out our ſalvation with holy trembling; content with a little here, ſo that we may honour God and lay up treaſure in heaven. Let us ſo live, that we may be bleſſings in our day, ſanctifying the places of our abode with holy converſation, example, and counſel; and then, my brethren, we may hope, and let it be our concluding prayer, (and God grant the wiſh,) that we, who now part in a priſon, may meet again for ever in paradiſe. *Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON VII.

Abſolute confidence to be placed in God alone *.

PSALM cxviii. ver. 9.

It is better to truſt in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes.

WHILST we are yet under the mournful impreſſions of that ſurprizing ſtroke, which has ſmitten down to the ground one of the greateſt lives in the world; whilſt we are under the rebuke of that rod, whoſe voice is ſo loud as to be heard over all the reformed churches in *Europe*, whilſt we have in our view ſo affecting a demonſtration of the vanity of all human

* Preached at *Dublin* March 22. 170½, on occaſion of the much-lamented death of that glorious prince K. *William* III.

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man hopes, it highly concerns us to make ſome ſerious improvement of ſo awful an event; an event ſo grievous, that it tempts us to cry out, as *David* upon the fall of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, *Oh tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Askelon, leſt the Philiſtines rejoice:* Let it not be told abroad, that *Britain* and *Ireland* have loſt ſo mighty a defender both of their faith and their liberties, under whoſe ſhadow we have ſat with great delight, and ſweetly enjoyed the fruit of his ſerene and wiſe government. It is not meet we ſhould ſo ſoon forget thoſe memorable princely excellencies, that noble bravery of mind, that ſedate and deep wiſdom, that catholic healing ſpirit, that concern for the public intereſt of religion, and that generous propenſity to the moſt deffuſive goodneſs, which ſo conſpicuouſly poſſeſs'd that great ſoul, and ſhone ſo brightly in the glorious enterprizes of his life; I ſay it is not meet, nor poſſible ſo eaſily to forget ſo many heroic virtues and glorious atchievements, which will not fail to tranſmit his moſt amiable character and grateful memory to many ſucceeding generations.

NAY, this ſtroke is the more bitter, becauſe it opens the wound which was but lately cloſed, and makes it bleed afreſh in the renewed

renewed remembrance of that excellent princeſs, who firſt led the way, in which her (now no longer ſurviving) conſort has followed her. We need but look back a little more than ſeven years to remember how happy we were in that royal pair, which were the glory of our land, and the joy of our hearts: But now alas! what work has death made in a few years in extinguiſhing two ſuch lives almoſt at once? two ſuch eclipſes ſo near cannot but aſtoniſh and alarm a conſiderate mind. Surely God is calling us to obſerve of how little value all human confidence is, and to entertain our minds with ſuch reflections as this in the text, *viz.* that in him alone, our quieting confidence can be wiſely lodged. SERM. VII.

UPON what particular occaſion this pſalm was penned is not known; it ſeems to have been written upon ſome eminent victory over potent enemies, it is a ſong of triumph, in which *David* aſcribes the ſucceſs not to his own arm, but to God's, which did valiant things; and if in the midſt of ſo great ſucceſs, when probably *David* and his princes had contributed to it by their wiſdom and valour, he could yet make ſo little account of mighty

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princes in circumſtances of triumph, when apt to be puffed up with their own vain-glorious thoughts, or others loud applauſes, how much more ſenſibly may we make this reflexion on the vanity of ſuch princes, when we behold them laid in the duſt at the feet of death?

David had in the foregoing verſe ſaid in general, it is better to truſt in God than in man, but leſt it ſhould be interpreted only of ordinary men, he here adds in the next words, that he means it of the *greateſt men*, who offer the higheſt temptations to our confidence, but yet nothing in compariſon of the invitations, which the divine perfections afford us to put our hope in God. For the text prefers confidence in God to any truſt in princes.

WE are not to underſtand this as abſolutely condemning all ſubordinate truſt in ſuch perſons, as the inſtruments of divine providence, for ſince God uſually works by means, it naturally raiſes ſome hopes in us to ſee means fitted for our uſe: To ſee a mighty prince diſpoſed to ſeek a people's good by eminent principles of clemency, juſtice, and generous goodneſs; to behold in him that bravery and wiſdom, which gives him anſwerable ability,

muſt

must needs excite ſome expectations, which are not wholly unreaſonable, when they are of an inferior nature; nor is this any invaſion upon the honour of God, when it is only in ſubordination to, and dependance upon his pleaſure and power, as the great director and controller of all. SERM. VII.

BUT the words plainly imply theſe two things,

I. THAT it is not ſafe nor wiſe to put any ſecure confidence in the greateſt men.

II. THAT we may ſafely put our truſt in God.

I. THAT it is not ſafe to put an abſolute confidence in princes, will appear from theſe reaſons.

1. BECAUSE princes, as well as others, are ſubject to corruption and unfaithfulneſs. There are moral qualifications of conſcience and honour, truth, juſtice, and honeſty, which are required as the foundation of any great and ſecure truſt: now as degenerate mankind are full of deceit, or at leaſt may be ſo under temptation, God alone is true, and every man may be a lyar, which warrants a wary caution in all our dealings even with men of the faireſt character: So princes them-

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ſelves, who are but men, are not above all danger of this contagion and blemiſh, tho' in them it is more odious and pernicious, becauſe the truſt repoſed in them is ſo great. Nay the Pſalmiſt, tho' a great prince himſelf, intimates that ſuch are more apt to deceive than others, and ſays *men of high degree are a lye*, *Pſalm* lxii. 9. either becauſe their temptations and opportunities are greater, or becauſe more feel the effects of ſuch a diſappointment; and he makes uſe of that conſideration to divert or moderate our truſt in them. And alas, how often have miſerable oppreſſed nations found the truth of this by coſtly experience, whilſt they have groaned under the tyranny of unfaithful rulers, who have betrayed the truſt repoſed in them by God and man? Who of us has not heard of princes and kings, that have taken oaths and made ſolemn promiſes with a deſign to break them, that have ſworn to preſerve the religion and government which they abhorred, and with wretched perfidiouſneſs have preſently conſpired to undermine them? and this either becauſe they ſcorned to be ſlaves to their words, or would not keep faith with heretics, or made no conſcience of an oath? How many

many poor people are there abroad in the world, whoſe rulers are become thieves and robbers inſtead of protectors; who count their ſubjects not their charge but their prey, and ſtick not to gratify their own ambition and luſt at the expence of the lives and liberties of thouſands. This is unfaithfulneſs to the ends of government and to the commiſſion they have from God, which is to be his miniſters for good to their people.

BUT I need not inſiſt upon this conſideration, which ſuppoſes princes may be treacherous, ſince this was not the thing, wherein our confidence failed us in relation to that great prince, who is now removed: He indeed was greatly truſted with our national intereſts in a time of great extremity, when all was confuſed at home, and threatning abroad; but he abuſed not that truſt by oppreſſing our liberties, or betraying us to our enemies; He was not ſo ambitious of the unenvy'd glory of ſome of his neighbours in being public murderers and robbers, nor coveted any ſhare in his character, who goes about ſeeking whom he may devour; no, his higheſt ambition was to be a faithful nurſing-father to his people.

2. BUT

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2. BUT a ſecond reaſon, ariſes from the conſideration of their unavoidable and natural infirmities, which belong to all men, even the beſt. For any thing that appears to the contrary the text may ſpeak of the beſt and mightieſt princes, and yet we may not expect very much from them.

SUPPOSE them ſuch as are more glorious within in real excellencies than in all their external regalia and pomp, rather adorning the throne and giving luſtre to the crown than deriving any from it: Suppoſe them animated with a glorious ambition to be public benefactors, and fill'd with compaſſionate deſigns of relief to all, and this conjoined with the moſt magnanimous proweſs and courage, able to exert itſelf in the higheſt gallantry of great and daring exploits with all wiſdom and conduct: In a word, (to ſuppoſe more than all this,) ſuppoſe ſuch a glorious prince as we have now loſt, yet alas, they are but men encompaſſed with infirmities; which we may conſider in two inſtances.

(1.) THEY are but feeble and limited agents, and can do but little compared with God. The principal part of their ability is to defend from evil, and to hinder others from

from doing hurt. The beſt princes ſeem to be as thoſe *Zech.* i. 20, 21. they are raiſed up as carpenters to break thoſe horns, that puſh at *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, and yet how many are thoſe grievances, which they cannot redreſs? How many are thoſe ſons of *Zerviah*, which are too hard for them? In how many caſes do the men of might loſe their hands, and the counſels of the wiſe are carried headlong? So the upſhot of all their brave endeavours is only this, *magnis tamen excidit auſis*, they aimed well but left the enterprize unfiniſhed. Should we apply to them under any immediate judgment from heaven, and cry, as ſhe did in the time of famine, *Help, O king*, the greateſt monarch on earth muſt own his impotency by that reply, *Unleſs the Lord help you, whence ſhould I help?* 2 *Kings* vii. 27. And even in thoſe matters, for which we judge them ſufficient inſtruments, they are oft reſtrained by God, on whom they depend for ſucceſs; they may bring to the birth, and yet have no ſtrength to bring forth; may prepare the horſe for the battle, and yet not command victory; may forge weapons for war, but cannot make them proſper; God may croſs them in their

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their deſigns of building a nation, as he did *David* in that of building his temple; in ſhort, they are weak and finite creatures, who gueſs in the dark, are miſtaken in their judgments, deceived in their informations, and impoſed on by their counſellors. We are fooliſh therefore, if we take thoſe titles of *Invincible*, *Infallible*, or *Unerring*, when applied to men, to be any other than ſordid and extravagant flattery.

Now who can reaſonably preſume much on ſuch limited agents, whoſe power is ſo narrow, and their arm ſo ſhort, are poſed and nonplus'd in ſo many caſes? and where they do accompliſh any thing that is great, it is not owing to *their* arm, but to the greater influence of the ſupreme King of Kings.

(2.) THEY are mortal duſt of the ſame compoſition with ourſelves. Great potentates may flatter themſelves, as tho' they were of another make and mould than the meaner ſort; they may diſdain alliance to common blood, but for all that the Pſalmiſt obſerves, they are ſubject to the ſame fate of mortality, and that ſhews the vanity of affecting ſo vaſt a diſtance; *I have ſaid ye are gods, but you ſhall die like men, Pſal.* lxxxii. 6, 7. The loftieſt

tieſt head muſt ſtoop, and lay its maſſy honours in the duſt; Death pays no deference to crowned heads, all earthly kings are tributary to the king of terrors. It enters the palace and climbs the throne, it rudely wreſts the ſcepter from the royal hand, undreſſes them of their ſtately robes, and tramples on all their majeſty and glory, *Ubi Cæſaris magnificentia? Quò nunc abiit pulchritudo tua?* ſaid one ſtanding at *Cæſar*'s tomb. Where is any remain of majeſty then? The greateſt monarchs are but as that bright image *Dan.* ii. 32, 33. tho' the head was gold, and the thighs braſs, yet the feet were of clay; on ſo brittle a foundation does all worldly glory and power ſtand. The beſt and mightieſt princes (as was ſaid of *David Acts* xiii. 36.) after ſerving their generation a while muſt fall aſleep, and then they are as inſignificant as other men; their remains may be reverenced for a time with pompous mourning in tragic ſtate, for there is a majeſty in ſolemn grief, but when laid by a while in the tomb all are alike. Who, that rakes among the aſhes of the dead, can diſtinguiſh or ſay, *This* is royal duſt, and *that* is beggarly mould; *This* was the head that wore the crown and

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the laurel, and *that* the head, which had not a hole to lie in; *This* was the arm that did valiant things, and *that* the hand uſed to ſervile labour? For this reaſon we are taught to moderate our confidence in them *Pſal.* cxlvi. 3, 4. *Their breath goeth forth, and then all their thoughts periſh*, their royal devices come to nought. It ſuppoſes kings may ſometimes be full of great and generous thoughts for the people's good, (for government is an anxious employ, and he that aims at being a public good muſt ſtudy and forecaſt, and not let all run at random, while he drenches himſelf in luxury and pleaſure,) but death deprives us of all the benefit of their kind intentions.

FEW princes have ſo much public ſpirit, ſo much deliberate forecaſt, and wiſe precaution, as to redeem their uſeful thoughts from being loſt at their death, by leaving their digeſted ſchemes for public ſervice. It was a ſingular inſtance of the wiſdom and tender care of our late glorious prince, (as well as of his ſerious apprehenſions of approaching death,) that he had any ſuch things in ſo deliberate a readineſs, like one who expected to die, and was reſolved to die with

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as much advantage to others as he could, or as he uſed to live. SERM. VII.

HOWEVER death breaks off the train of thoſe thoughts for ever; They mind us no more, can ſerve us no longer, and therefore are not much to be relied on, as a refuge. What a poor ſecurity of a nation's happineſs are two or three princely lives? for ſo many have we loſt in about ſeven years ſpace. We have ſeen one die in her full ſtrength and in the prime of life, another has languiſhed and decayed away, beſides a third nipt in the bud. What vain props are theſe for a nation's ſecurity, which is ſuppoſed to ſurvive for many generations? If ſuch might always live, we think perhaps the public would be provided for, but ſince many alarms of their frailty raiſe frequent jealouſies and fears, and they muſt certainly die ſoon, this tells us it is not good to put great truſt in them.

II. I COME now to the ſecond general, *viz.* That it is more wiſe and ſafe by far to truſt in God, becauſe none of theſe exceptions lie againſt him. For

1. HE is a moſt juſt and gracious Being, who for certain will keep his covenant and promiſe

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promiſe with all faithfulneſs and truth; His goodneſs and his truth may be relied on, for none is ſo juſt and ſo good as he; and thoſe princes who are moſt faithful and true, are but an image of him therein.

2. HE has infinite unlimited ability *Dan.* iv. 35. If he engage for a people, he can raiſe them from a ſinking eſtate to be the head and top over all. He can overturn armies and counſels, for there is no wiſdom nor power can ſtand againſt him. He is of infinite wiſdom, and has a comprehenſive view of all mens motions and projects, and ſo cannot be deceived in his meaſures; he is alſo of infinite ſtrength *Pſalm* lxxxix. 8, 9, 10. He can be terrible to the kings of the earth, and cut off the ſpirit of princes, he can make weak things to confound the ſtrong, ſo that the worm *Jacob* ſhall ariſe, and threſh the mountains ſmall, and the hills like chaff, *Iſa.* xli. 14, 15.

3. HE endures for ever, his years decay not, nor do his thoughts periſh. The courſe of nature will not laſt ſo long as he, who ſaw the beginning, and will ſee the end of heaven and earth, *Pſal.* cii. 26, 27. No diſeaſe nor indiſpoſition can obſtruct him in the

exercise of his care; *From everlasting to everlasting thou art God,* says the Psalmist *Psal.* xc. 1, 2. and observes hereupon, that he was *Israel's* refuge in all generations, not the benefit of one age only, but from age to age; and he reigns as long as he lives, for he is the king immortal and eternal; no sons of violence can dethrone him, whose throne remains for ever and ever. And upon this account he is a better object of trust than any other. Here we may quietly rest under the refuge of an eternal God, who will surely outlive all our enemies, which we may fear will arise, and will outlive all our posterity, for whom we are concerned, and for whose sake we so earnestly covet his continual care. SERM. VII.

I SHALL now proceed to make some application of the foregoing discourse.

1. WE may hence learn a very humbling instruction concerning the vanity of all human hopes and worldly confidence: For where can we repose our expectation, if not in mighty and good princes? What can we look for in lesser matters, if in the greatest and most valuable persons we cannot lodge our trust without continual fear all along, and disappointment at last? If men of high de-

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gree are a lye, and men of low degree are vanity, which way then ſhall we turn, high or low, for ſecurity? Where ſhall we find reſt for the ſoles of our feet, ſince the very pillars of the earth are unſtable as water? If eminent deſert or high eſteem, if great uſefulneſs, or the paſſionate affections of many could have ſecured life, we had ſtill truſted under that royal ſhadow, which is now gone away as a withering gourd. How then can we wonder if our private comforts fail us, if our friends die and ourſelves expire, when ſuch as are worth ten thouſand of us die in the midſt of their days and of our hopes? Oh then! let us ceaſe from mortal men, and mortal concerns, for what are they to be accounted of?

2. YET all this does not forbid us to expreſs a great value for princes that are truly good. Indeed it limits our eſteem of them, as of ſubordinate dependent inſtruments, but yet ſo conſider'd they are moſt valuable bleſſings, when they rule in the fear of God, and are promoters of juſtice, piety, and peace; they do good to the bodies and ſouls of millions; they are ſuns in their orbs; multitudes rejoice in their light, and are cheriſhed by it, and

and cannot but regard them with honour and love, nor can ſuch fail to be had in an everlaſting remembrance, more ſavoury than that of the moſt precious ointment. SERM. VII.

AND indeed in our caſe, who can be other than grateful to the memory of ſo endeared a prince, ſo great a benefactor, and ſo ſignal an inſtrument of God's providence for ſuch amazing and kind purpoſes? We have loſt a wiſe and vigilant protector, who had a ſoul big enough to animate two bodies politic, and to diſcharge all its functions with a vigorous influence; one, who according to the nice judgment of a very able ſtateſman was in his younger days of celebrated wiſdom and penetration, not that wiſdom, (ſays Sir *William Temple*) which is neither uſeful to a man's ſelf nor others, but that ſolid wiſdom, which fits a man for application to weighty buſineſs; not ſo much what enabled him to talk as to do: not only to do, but to bear much, which is beyond all the ordinary inſtances of valour. *For he, that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he, that taketh a city.* *Prov.* xvi. 32.

WE have loſt a great and valiant general, one who could inſpire an army with bravery and

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courage, whoſe whole life was a ſcene of gallantry and great undertakings, (nor had he wore the crown, if he had not ſo well wore the helmet,) not one who was afraid to be ſeen at the head of his army in war, except in their flight, but in the hotteſt of the battel, and tho' always through great mercy found alive, yet it was amidſt the greateſt numbers of the ſlain: A prince that talked little, and boaſted leſs, but by the loud language of his great exploits was heard of far and near with honour and reverence, as his death is now with univerſal grief and lamentation in all the reformed churches, and farther.

NOR yet was he ſet on by ſo baſe motives, as the ambition and luſts of tyrants ſuggeſt; for certainly for a prince to employ his power to terrify the weak and innocent, to invade his neighbours merely for the glory of his arms and the enlarging his conqueſts, to be prodigal of blood and do a thouſand barbarous things to gratify his deviliſh pride, I ſay, theſe things make up the moſt odious character, by which the memory of a prince can be made infamous to poſterity, who will only have it to ſay, that ſuch an one was a malignant plague in his time: But I am

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ſpeaking of one, who always drew the ſword as the champion of juſtice, and the ſuccourer of the oppreſſed. The glory of his anceſtors, which was to be compaſſionate defenders, and not unjuſt invaders, never ſhone with more luſtre than in him, who has brought up the rear with ſuch honour, that the laſt may be ſaid to be the firſt. SERM. VII.

A TRULY public ſpirit reigned in his breaſt, as a common father to all, his throne was never ſtained with perſecution or violence to conſcience, which being the worſt ſort of unrighteous oppreſſion was the fartheſt from finding room in that generous mind; nor yet was this from a careleſs contempt of religion, for how frequent a ſollicitor was he in the unconteſted cauſe of religion, *viz.* public practical reformation?

IN ſhort, he was one, that needs not the pious fraud of an Εικων Βασιλικη, or any feigned portraiture to ſet off his memory, who himſelf has left us ſo many monuments of his princely virtues. In the deliverance of theſe nations from popery and ſlavery we have a ſtanding memorial of his *generous zeal for our religion and liberties*, which he ſo bravely reſcued from the brink of ruin. In

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the recovery of this kingdom we have a monument of his own *perſonal conduct and valour*, as well as of God's mercy in his eminent deliverance; We have a monument of his *religious virtue* in the wholeſome laws he has left us againſt profaneneſs, and the care he took of ſettling a proteſtant ſucceſſion; And of his *healing catholic ſpirit*, which was above the bigotry of a party, in the reverſal of thoſe perſecuting laws, which had been the ſhame of former kings, and almoſt the utter ruin of their kingdoms: Under him we had the Apoſtle's wiſh of living peaceable lives in godlineſs and honeſty: In a word he has not only renewed the face of our coin, but that of our kingdom too. Thus he ſerved his own generation before he fell aſleep, and I doubt not but the generations to come will riſe up and call him bleſſed; for there was no king in our *Iſrael* before him, that was like unto him, and I wiſh any ſuch may ever ariſe after him; ſo diligently, ſo entirely devoted to the public good of mankind.

HOWEVER, in the midſt of our amazing grief we have reaſon to bleſs God, that he raiſed up ſo glorious an inſtrument, that he did ſuch great things for us by him, that he preſerved

preſerved him ſo long in the midſt of open wars and ſecret conſpiracies, that he has happily ſurvived his dangerous rival, (I mean to us dangerous,) that he has lived to ſettle the royal ſucceſſion in the proteſtant line, that ſo *Rome*'s vaſſals may no more trample on the *Britiſh* throne or betray its crown, and to enter into ſuch alliances and form that ſcene, of whoſe concluſion we have entertained ſuch great hopes. SERM. VII.

AND now that this bright ſtar is ſet, the great God can make others to ariſe in ſome other horizon, who may promote the ſame deſigns. Nor is it to be forgotten that at home is a princeſs to ſucceed, whoſe ſtedfaſtneſs to the reformed religion under dangerous temptations warrants our hope, that ſhe will vigorouſly defend it both at home and abroad; and one ſo nearly allied to that late excellent princeſs, whoſe admirable virtues have yet ſo fragrant and lively a remembrance among us, that we cannot wiſh a greater felicity for theſe lands than to ſee the throne filled with ſuch another.

3. LET this then be our comfort, that after all our diſappointment from mortal princes we ſtill have that God to truſt in, who

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is a much better object of our confidence. This uſed to be an allay to good men's troubles in ſuch a caſe: When they had loſt the breath of their noſtrils, *viz.* their king, and the crown was fallen from their heads, then they retreated to God, *But thou Lord remaineſt for ever, and thy throne to all generations*, *Lamen.* v. 19. ſo *Pſal.* cxlvi. 4, 10. *He is our king, he is our judge, and he can ſave us, whether by few, or by many.* And this is a very quieting thought in the midſt of all confuſions and revolutions, that an almighty all-wiſe God reigns, whoſe counſels ſhall ſtand to all generations. *If God therefore be for us, who can be againſt us?* Rom. viii. 31.

WHAT remains then, but that we endeavour to engage this God, that he may be on our ſide, and then, as *David* did a little before the text, we may defy all all our enemies round about: And this muſt be done,

1. BY a deep repentance, which this rod calls for, for tho' princes die through frailty, yet it may be haſtened, or timed ſo as to carry the marks of God's manifeſt wrath; Thus it is expreſly threatned, that if the people do wickedly, God will *cut off their king*, 1 Sam. xii. 25.

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Let us then be humble under this rebuke, and no more hate to be reformed, leſt he proceed to *cut us off alſo.* SERM. VII.

2. By exerciſing an honourable dependance on God, accounting more of and expecting more from him, than from the greateſt princes or their moſt numerous armies, which we ſhould always conſider to be but in ſubordination to him.

3. By ardent prayer, in which we are to expreſs our truſt in him by pouring out our hearts before him, that ſo God may be a refuge for us *Pſal.* lxii. 8. For *Zion*'s ſake let us not hold our peace nor give him any reſt, until he make his ſhattered *Jeruſalem* the praiſe of the whole earth.

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

Our obedience to God muſt be abſolute and entire.

MARK x. 22.

And he was ſad at that ſaying, and went away grieved; for he had great poſſeſſions.

THESE words repreſent to us the deplorable iſſue of a very hopeful affair tranſacted between our Lord Jeſus and a ſeemingly well inclined young man. The matter was of no leſs concernment than his everlaſting ſalvation; and pity it was that it ſhould miſcarry, that any one, who had a concern to be ſaved, ſhould drop ſhort, or that any, who come to Chriſt, ſhould go away ſorrowful; but yet ſo it was with the young

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young man in the text, who puts a ſerious queſtion to our Lord, not without ſome earneſt concern, ver. 17. *Good maſter, what ſhall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?* It ſeems, that his heart was under ſome conviction and feeling of the weight of that important affair, which made him put the queſtion for help and direction; for ſurely he had no other deſign, ſince our Saviour ſaw much good inclination in him, that moved his affection for him, ver. 21. *Then Jeſus beholding him loved him.* For anſwer to his queſtion our Lord gives him ſerious counſel, *viz.* that he muſt obediently reſign himſelf to the authority and commands of God, ſome inſtances of which he mentions; for indeed there is no other way to life by Chriſt himſelf, but by a ſincere ſubjection of our heart and ways to the great God with reverence, and holy love, and faith in Chriſt.

THIS young man having too narrow conceptions of holy ſincere obedience, and reckoning himſelf innocent, becauſe free from all outward groſs tranſgreſſions of theſe commandments, replies with ſome pleaſure and confidence, that he had been practiſing this counſel all his life; he now thinks all is well,

and

and begins almoſt to triumph, but he was not ſo ready and forward in his obedience, as he imagined, as appears in the ſequel, for Chriſt has one word more to ſay before the matter be determined, *viz.* to put his obedience to the trial whether it was ſo intire and hearty as he required and the other pretended, whether any luſt or worldly object was competitor with the authority of God, or whether he was willing to reſign all in obedience, and take God's favour and promiſes for the recompence: *One thing thou lackeſt*, ſays our Lord to him, *Go thy way, ſell whatever thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven, come and take up the croſs and follow me.* But here he refuſes ſubjection, he is for purſuing the matter no farther; after this propoſition all goes back again, *He was ſad at that ſaying, and went away grieved, for he had great poſſeſſions.* The former denotes the ſadneſs that appeared in his countenance and dejected looks, the other the grief and trouble of his mind; he could not tell how to reſolve upon parting with all in this world, and yet could not but grieve and lament to think he ſhould miſs of eternal life in the other.

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FROM these words I shall make the following observations,

I. I observe, that he, who knowingly persists in one instance of resolved disobedience to the laws of God, will certainly be rejected by him and forfeit his claim to eternal life, whatever obedience he may have given in other instances. It was upon this, that Christ and the young man broke off, *he went away*. He found our Lord would not receive him because one thing was lacking, and having no hope of prevailing he departs without success; for the following reflexion, which Christ makes on the case, *How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* shews the desperate condition he went away in, tho' he had kept the other commandments even from his youth.

NOR are we to think he will deal with us upon easier terms, or that we shall ever inherit eternal life, if we resolvedly continue to refuse obedience to any one of his commandments, because it may seem harsh and burdensome. There never was any man yet sincere in his obedience to God, who did not consent and resolve on universal subjection in every

every point: However he might fall ſhort in the meaſure or degree of accompliſhment, or unhappily interrupt it by turning aſide to the right or to the left, yet ſurely he never ſet at nought any precept, or lived in a choſen defiance to the authority of his maker in any inſtance. If for any time he did ſo, tho' it were but in one ſingle point of obedience, ſo long was he fallen from his integrity. *David* well underſtood this, *Pſalm* cxix. ver. 6. where he tells us, that the ſtrength of his confidence towards God could no otherwiſe be ſupported but by the univerſality of his obedience, *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto* all *thy commandments*; if there were one commandment to which he had not reſpect, ſhame would cover him ſtill. And St. *James* confirms this, chap. ii. ver. 10. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all*; thereby aſſuring us, that all our more numerous inſtances of ſubjection are utterly ſunk and loſt in our ſettled refuſal of one law; for ſo I underſtand him, not of an unwary accidental act, but of an habitual refuſal of a leſs, or a preſumptuous oppoſition to a greater commandment. How then ſhall he, who is thus SERM. VIII.

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guilty of all, be able to ſtand in the day of accounts? foraſmuch as there is no repentance, while that one commandment is ſtill refuſed.

NOR can it indeed be expected, that any value ſhould be put on all our compliances with other duties, ſince a known and choſen diſobedience to this one ſhews the man to be under the dominion of ſin and in rebellion againſt his maker. Since there is a point, in which he will not yield to God neither for his commands nor threatnings, his ſovereignty is rejected in the renunciation of his law, and the mind, which cannot be ſubject to the law of God, is carnal and at enmity againſt him, *Rom.* viii. 7. The ſoul therefore, that ſins preſumptuouſly, ſhall die, if he perſiſts in it. For this contempt of God's authority in an allowed ſettled and perſevering courſe of a known and choſen ſin is the higheſt aggravation of guilt beyond what ariſes merely from the matter of the ſin itſelf, and makes a leſs fault ſwell into a greater abomination than it might otherwiſe ſeem to be, and of an higher rank than when committed ignorantly or by ſudden ſurprize, becauſe it is done with more malignity

lignity and with a deliberate ſettled contempt of the majeſty of heaven. SERM. VIII.

THE great aim of true religion and of the divine government is to bring the creature to an abſolute ſubjection to the will of God; and the great conteſt between God and the ſinner is, whoſe will ſhall take place; the almighty cannot renounce his ſovereignty, *As I live*, ſaith the Lord, *to me every knee ſhall bow*, *Iſa.* xlv. 23. He is an holy jealous God, and will not give his peculiar glory to another; ſo that to refuſe any one known law is to contend with our maker, to ſin with an high hand, and to fix limits to his dominion; but unleſs we yield, he will break us with a rod of iron; what elſe can be the iſſue of ſuch a contention?

IT is to be feared there are ſome, who, tho' they pretend reverence for God's commands, and do many things, and abſtain from many crimes out of conſcience towards God, do yet venture to make ſome reſerve and exception, who, tho' they know they live in the cuſtomary practice of ſome particular ſin, which eaſily beſets them, and are the ſervants of that ſin, which captivates them in almoſt every aſſault, yet they continually give

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way to it, and never come to a ſerious reſolution of breaking it off. It is ſo pleaſing to their violent luſts, or ſo ſuitable to their condition and calling, or ſo advantageous to their trade and livelihood, or would expoſe them to the reproach or ridicule of their companions, who would think it ſtrange if they ſhould yield to ſuch a thing as conſcience, and run not ſtill with them into the ſame exceſs of riot, that they cannot think of abandoning their vicious practices, or of making reſtitution, where they know God requires it; They reſolve rather to venture the worſt, and hope notwithſtanding they ſhall be forgiven; and that ſince it is but in one point they offend, while they are very dutiful in many others, and it might go near to ruin them in the world if they paid obedience to it, they hope God will diſpenſe with it.

BUT let ſuch conſider, if the young man in the text had not all this to ſay: He had kept the commandments in all the inſtances of ordinary duty, Chriſt ſays he lacked but one thing, by complying with which he muſt have been reduced to nothing in the world, and caſt upon providence, and yet none of theſe things

things excuſed him, Chriſt rejected him for all this, and he is repreſented as one loſt. Will you then after all this flatter your ſelves in any one inſtance of reſolved diſobedience? Will Chriſt receive and own you in another world, who would not receive one ſuch for his follower in this? You ſee then how abſolute our obedience muſt be in order to the obtaining eternal life. SERM. VIII.

I would not ſtrain matters to carry religion to impracticable heights, or to diſquiet any man's mind to whom God ſpeaks peace, but I muſt not forbear to tell you the truth, when it is of ſo much conſequence; and judge you if it be not plain. Yet miſtake me not, I am not ſaying, that every one, who ignorantly lives in the neglect of a duty, or preſumptuouſly ſins with deliberation, will be put out of the capacity of being ſaved; No, beyond doubt many an excellent man has very grievouſly and daringly offended, not only when his principles have been dormant and reaſon and conſcience off their guard, but with deliberation, and yet has recovered and found mercy; but then it was not till after they had ſubmitted and yielded themſelves to God in the loweſt abaſements of a broken

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and a contrite heart: But I ſay the man, who perſiſts in the refuſal of his known duty in any one point, has no good claim to the promiſe of eternal life, for this ſuppoſes a preſumptuous ſin continued in without repentance.

THERE is a wide difference between a man's tranſgreſſing a law againſt his ſettled reſolution and uſual practice of obedience, and his never once conſenting to obey it; between his turning aſide from the right way, in which he did walk, and his never reſolving to enter into it: The language of the one is like that of *David*, *Pſalm* cxix. ver. 176. *I have gone aſtray like a loſt ſheep, ſeek thy ſervant, for I do not forget thy commandments*; but the language of the other is like that of the obſtinate Jews in *Egypt*, *As for the word that thou haſt ſpoken to us in the name of the Lord we will not hearken unto thee*, *Jer.* xliv. 16.

BUT I expect the ſinner will plead in his own cauſe, that the caſe in the text was a peculiar and particular one, and that our Lord with unuſual rigour treated this young man, requiring what was beyond the ordinary meaſures of obedience, and that therefore we muſt not hence draw rules for others, from whom the ordinary meaſures only are expected with more

more favourable allowances than were made to him at this time of ſpecial trial. But this is all a vain deluſion, for tho' the particular inſtance of ſelling all and giving to the poor may not be commanded us, yet whatever is commanded us is bound on us as peremptorily as that was on him, and our obedience thereto is as indiſpenſable as his. And indeed the more extraordinary rigour there ſeems to be in the precept, the more room there was for an excuſe, that eternal life might not be ſet at an higher price and on harder terms to him than to the reſt of mankind, whilſt the duties injoined on us are common to all and ſo more indiſpenſable. SERM. VIII.

AND yet in truth it was not ſo, here was no more rigorous ſeverity uſed towards this young man than towards all Chriſtians, except in what was circumſtantial: He was only put upon the actual doing of that, which all Chriſtians are bound to be in a readineſs to do, when called upon, *viz.* to quit all that is dear to fleſh and blood. Was there more in this than in quitting houſe and land, father and mother, and even life it ſelf, which yet all Chriſtians are required to be in a readineſs to do, *Mat.* x. 37. *Luke* xiv. 26? Was

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any man ever exempted from theſe conditions of diſcipleſhip and ſalvation? Or are theſe terms any where abated? The difficulty is not ſo much in actual parting with theſe things, when the mind is framed aright into a real willingneſs, as it is in bringing it into that willingneſs by denying ourſelves, and conquering our love to the fleſh and the world by a ſuperior love to God and Chriſt, and a ſuperlative eſteem for the glorious things of a joyful eternity. Now this hardeſt part we muſt all be brought to, or we ſhall be none of Chriſt's diſciples, ſo that the difference is not ſo great as is pretended.

WE bleſs God indeed juſtly, that we are not put on thoſe dangerous trials, that we are not perſecuted nor afflicted, becauſe in all things we muſt give thanks, and we do well to rejoice, becauſe we ſhould always rejoice in the Lord even in divers tribulations, *Jam.* i. 2. But if it be only the triumphs of a carnal mind, that is an enemy to the croſs of Chriſt, becauſe it minds only earthly things; if we bleſs our ſelves that we lived not in thoſe apoſtolical times, when a Chriſtian and a Martyr were very near a-kin, becauſe we cannot deny our appetites and deſires, we much deludе

lude ourſelves, for there is always occaſion for that in cutting off a right hand and abandoning a darling ſin. If we are exempted from the ſeverer exerciſes of ſelf-denial in actual bearing the croſs, we are for certain inexcuſable, if we give not this proof of it by forſaking with ſincere reſolution and habitual practice every known ſin. In vain then do we flatter ourſelves, that we ſhall have eaſier terms of ſalvation now, or that our righteous judge will bear with our allowed refuſal of obedience in any one point. SERM. VIII.

LET us then ſearch our hearts and try our ways, and ſee if there be any evil way in us, and forſake it. If conſcience tell you there is one thing lacking in you, one duty you have neglected, one evil you have cuſtomarily practiſed, reſolve this day to yield the point to God and your conſcience; write a bill of divorce to your moſt favourite ſins, make no account of your keeping the other commandments, unleſs your ſubmiſſion be intire; think it not hard that your obedience muſt be univerſal, ſpare not the right eye, the one, the only thing you would have ſpared, for it is better to enter into life having one eye, than having two eyes to be caſt into hell-fire. But perhaps you

SERM. VIII. will ſay, that tho' you do not forſake your ſins, yet you are greatly troubled at them. I would therefore obſerve to you in the ſecond place,

II. THAT it is poſſible and not unuſual for men to depart from the way of their duty and the path of life with a great deal of grief and ſore regret, and yet perſiſt therein to their ruin. They are ſometimes very uneaſy and diſſatisfied in their evil courſes, yet this neither reclaims them from their ſin, nor excuſes them in it. Be they never ſo diſquieted and vexed with their evil choice, ſo long as they hold faſt the cauſe of their grief, they muſt hold faſt the ſad conſequences of it. You ſee it was the caſe of this young man, he went away with a ſad countenance and a grieved heart from his duty and his real intereſt, and quits the purſuit of his too faintly deſired ſalvation with as much fear and trembling, as that with which others work out theirs.

1. MANY a ſinner is greatly troubled at the thoughts of the evil way he has choſen and walks in; he forſakes his duty, but his heart tells him he has made an ill choice, and wronged

wronged his own ſoul, and leaves him full of confuſion. There needs no more to cauſe this grief in him, but that he be convinced he breaks the laws of God, and that he have ſome tender ſenſe of the doleful conſequence of his diſpleaſure; both which may remain in a ſinner, when his innocence and integrity are gone, to make him uneaſy, when it could not make him good, to repreſent his folly, when it could not make him wiſe, and to aggravate his danger, when it could not make him ſafe. SERM. VIII.

ALL indeed, who reject our Lord Jeſus, do not go away thus grieved; ſome miſerable ſinners there are faſt bound in the bonds of iniquity, ſo ignorant and hardened as not to be grieved, at leaſt not to appear ſad; they make light of the offer'd favour of God, as is ſaid of ſome *Mat.* xxii. 5. pleaſant and eaſy in their ſenſual courſes, as if they had done well in putting from them eternal life, and had made a good bargain in ſaving their worldly intereſt and fleſhly luſts, tho' at the riſque and hazard of their immortal ſouls; but as it has coſt them many a pang to arrive at ſuch an harden'd temper, ſo they are not all, who are thus paſt feeling.

THERE

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THERE may be others ſo ignorant as ſcarcely to diſcern between good and evil, the way to life and the way to death; but ſurely the generality of ſinners under the light of the goſpel and the lamps of the ſanctuary know better the nature of religion, and what a dangerous thing it is to rebel againſt God; They know full well, that they, who do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God. And even thoſe, who are under the light of nature, may by the law written in their hearts know the judgment of God, that they, who do ſuch things, are worthy of death.

THEY therefore, who know they are acting in contradiction to their duty, tho' the influence of their vicious paſſions be ſuperior to the motives of conſcience and religion, muſt needs find ſome gall and wormwood in the very pleaſures of ſin, ſome ſtruggles of an oppreſſed conſcience, ſome ſad miſgivings of a reluctant doubtful mind: While they indulge themſelves in forbidden gratifications, they flatter themſelves with groundleſs hopes of ſomething or other, but they are afraid again, that after all they will not hold. They have heard ſo much of heaven and of the worth of ſouls, that they cannot give them

up without ſome inward ſighs or groans, ſome conflict and anguiſh; they ſometimes ſtart and ſhrink under the angry menaces of an offended God, ſo that they make ſhipwreck of their conſciences and ſalvation, like them, who caſt overboard their treaſures reſolutely, but with pain and grief.

2. NOTWITHSTANDING this uneaſineſs in an evil way they ſtill perſiſt in it. *He went away grieved*, but he went away however, he did not alter his choice, nor did his grief, as far as appears, bring him back to Chriſt. A diſobedient heart may be uneaſy and fret, and yet be ſtubborn and obſtinate, may grieve and yet reſiſt, may ſtill go on, tho' his way be hedged in with thorns, *he holds faſt deceit and refuſes to return*, Jer. viii. 5.

SOMETIMES perhaps he almoſt takes up a reſolution to forſake his evil way, but goes not through with it: We are apt to think that ſurely this conviction and remorſe will weary him, and force him for his quiet's ſake to amend his ways and cry to God; but alas, it often proves quite otherwiſe, and inſtead of that he endeavours to make his evil ways more eaſy by deceitful excuſes to extenuate his crimes,

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crimes, and flattering unreaſonable hopes of God's mercy to leſſen the puniſhment. In ſhort the perplexed creature is torn and divided with inward tormenting conflict, but what the iſſue will be is uncertain; but too oft the caſe proves this, that the man's luſts are too ſtrong for his conſcience, and notwithſtanding all his remorſe and regret he goes on and dies in his ſins. He is ſomewhat unwilling to loſe eternal life, but more unwilling to croſs his appetites and crucify his fleſh, to want proviſion for its luſts, or to ſee himſelf at an under and in contempt in the world; and ſo the ſmaller averſion gives way to the greater: Conſcience is left to torment, but ſin and luſt to reign, to make him more miſerable in this world, but not to prevent his miſery in another; conſcience tells him he is like to periſh, his wicked heart inclines him to run the venture: Godly ſorrow indeed works repentance, but then it works amendment alſo; for

3. THAT uneaſineſs and grief, which does not reclaim the ſinner, will not excuſe him. Chriſt ſpeaks of this man as hopeleſs, notwithſtanding he went away ſad, he pitied him as he did other ſinners, but did not promiſe to ſave him. It may ſeem to be ſome abatement

abatement of a crime, that it is committed with reluctant unwillingneſs, as it argues the man not hardened in ſin; but then on the other hand it carries an aggravation in it, as acting againſt the urgent remonſtrances of an awaken'd mind; it is no very comfortable plea to ſay, my conſcience was ſtrong, but my luſts were ſtronger, my ſins coſt me dear, but nevertheleſs I was reſolved to have them: God never ſays, If you do evil, do it not without grief, without violence to conſcience, but do it not at all; becauſe in our deliberate acts there is ſtill more of willingneſs than unwillingneſs, and the prevailing choice is moſt conſidered. SERM. VIII.

IF there be any irregularities, any ſudden diſorders and follies in our thoughts and affections, which it is not in the power of a prevailing ſanctified will wholly to prevent, we may count them for infirmities, which will find eaſy pardon from him, who knows our weak frame: But we extend this too far, if we call any deliberate ſin an infirmity, when our conſciences have debated, conſidered, and argued the point, and yet we reſolve to do it; God accepts indeed a willing mind 2 *Cor.* viii. 12. but that is, when it is not in our power

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to do, as in the caſe of alms, but where it is, he will not accept it alone, becauſe then it is not a willing mind without it be accompanied with ſuitable actions.

I doubt many hurt themſelves in this point by a miſtaken interpretation of ſuch texts, as ſpeak of the ſtrife between the fleſh and the ſpirit in Chriſtians, *Gal.* v. 17. They are ready to interpret their reluctance and remorſe of conſcience, as the ſpiritual ſtrife againſt the fleſh, and ſo by this mark they may deem themſelves good men ſtill; but this is not the evidence of a good man, tho' it be a truth, that the ſpirit luſts againſt the fleſh, (or his mind is enlighten'd by the ſpirit of God againſt his lower fleſhly deſires and paſſions,) but he is the true Chriſtian, in whom the ſpirit prevails againſt the fleſh, who is led by the ſpirit, and walks in the ſpirit, and brings forth the fruits of it; elſe whatever be the ſtruggle, if he overcomes not but walks after the fleſh, he ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God, ver. 21—25. *Rom.* viii. 13, 14.

As to *Rom.* vii. where indeed we find this complaint, *The evil which I hate, that do I*, ver. 15. it is rather the account of a carnal ſinner under the law, in whoſe perſon thoſe words

are

are ſpoke, for if this was St. *Paul*'s caſe, then ſo are the words, ver. 14. *I am carnal ſold under ſin*, quite contrary to what he ſays, chap. viii. ver. 2. *That the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus had made him free from the law of ſin and death*, and to the conſtant deſcription of holineſs throughout the ſcriptures. SERM. VIII.

FROM what has been ſaid I ſhall only make theſe two inferences.

1. How unſafe then is it to think uneaſineſs and reluctance of mind under ſin, either in the acting it or in after-reflexions, a mark of ſincere piety? It is only a ſign of not being a ſinner of the firſt rate, it is no more than what they may feel, who turn their backs on Chriſt and his ſalvation, as here we ſee was the caſe in the text: Much leſs will mere grief and regret afterwards be ſufficient; this comes later and behind the other, and yet how many are there, who take this for true repentance, which is a quite diſtinct thing, 2 *Cor.* vii. 10? And indeed in the caſe of an unreformed ſinner it is no virtue, ſince it is only what he cannot help; it is not what he encourages, but endeavours to ſmother and divert, more than to purſue its natural dictates. Is this any great religion to regret and confeſs

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ſin, and not to forſake it? To tell God you are ſorry you have done evil, and at the ſame time tell him in your hearts, that you intend to do ſo again?

IT is indeed an hopeful ſtep towards ſalvation to have your eyes opened and ſee your danger, to have your deſires awakened under importunate cravings for eternal life, ſo as to reſent the thoughts of a miſcarriage with great grief and trouble: But yet this is not enough, to have good deſires for heaven without a ſuitable preparation for it, to be under the conviction of guilt without being influenced thereby to amendment; for ſuch conviction only is ſaving, which reclaims from every evil way, which determines the ſoul's prevailing conſent to yield up all, and to entertain ſuch ardent deſires of ſalvation, as ſhall make us willing to renounce all without exception to obtain it.

2. WHAT then remains, but that of neceſſity we take part with conſcience, and ceaſe to do evil by giving up every ſin, particularly that which ſo eaſily beſets us. Here it becomes you to conſider,

(1.) YOU will have little elſe but miſery in this life, till you do it. What enjoyment could this man have in returning to his great poſſeſſions after this? What an uneaſy life will you have

have, continually torn and rackt between conſcience and evil deſires? To ſuffer and ſtruggle for an eternal crown is indeed worthy of a noble mind, but to endure all this for an eternal night of darkneſs and woe is downright madneſs.

(2.) IT is to no purpoſe to ſtand out, for it is you muſt yield, our Lord will not recede; indeed it is you only are unreaſonable. Tho' you be troubled at your caſe, yet it will not avail, he will not accept your lamentations and ſorrows inſtead of your compliance; if you will break off your ſins, and forſake your luſts, you may be accepted, but you will never have other terms.

LET us then return back to him, from whom we went away grieved, accept his terms, and do his commandments, whatever deſires, whatever temptations, whatever intereſts we croſs; and he, who works both to will and to do, will help us to overcome, and looſe our bonds, will both heal our backſlidings and love us freely, and after we have ſuffered and ſtruggled a while here, will make us perfect and give us eternal life, which is better, far better than our great poſſeſſions, or all the ſenſual triumphs and pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.

SERMON IX.

Diligence the likelieſt way to riſe in the world.*

PROV. xxii. 29.

Seeſt thou a man diligent in his buſineſs, he ſhall ſtand before kings.

THO' the great concern of man is his eternal ſalvation in another world, yet this is not the only thing he is required to mind, but in ſubordination thereto the buſineſs of this frail life muſt be regarded. Nature has appointed us a taſk as well as grace, only this muſt regulate that. For in the wiſe conſtitution of God our ſecular

* Preached at *Dublin* May 1. 1700, before the Weavers company upon their anniverſary day for chuſing a Maſter.

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employments and relations are adopted into the number of religious ſervices; ſo that in the right diſcharge of them we are not only prudent for ourſelves, but are likewiſe obedient to God: And there is much more of religion lies in the regular diſcharge of our ſecular buſineſs, than I doubt moſt men are aware of; a conſiderable diligence is, you ſee, repreſented with great commendation in the text; *Seeſt thou a man diligent in his buſineſs, he ſhall ſtand before kings.*

IT were in vain to inquire after the connexion of the words, they being one of *Solomon*'s ſingle aphoriſms, wherein he recommends to us diligence in our worldly employments.

1. HE propounds ſuch an induſtrious man as one remarkable. *Seeſt thou a man diligent in his buſineſs?* As if he had ſaid, obſerve, behold him, as one well worthy of your notice, and who cannot eaſily be overlooked, he has ſomething ſo excellent in him.

2. HE prognoſticates ſuch an one to be a riſing man, fit for preferment, which will not fail of being either the natural or moral reward of his induſtry.

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THE words afford us this obſervation, SERM. IX.
That induſtrious diligence in our proper temporal concerns is very good and commendable.

FROM hence I obſerve,

I. THAT ſome ſecular buſineſs or employment is proper for every man, for of ſuch buſineſs the text evidently ſpeaks, and ſuppoſes a proper ſhare to each. The wiſe God made no men for ciphers; it is their own fault, if they render themſelves ſo by neglecting the active powers he has given them. And tho' he has made religion the great and common buſineſs of all men, yet it is no debaſement of human nature to concern itſelf in the inferior matters of this animal life, or ſuch as relate to the preſent good of civil communities; for

1. GOD has placed men in ſuch circumſtances, that generally they cannot ſubſiſt without ſome particular calling. He has given us bodies of ſuch a make as conſtantly to require food and raiment and many occaſional conveniencies, no otherwiſe to be ſupplied than by the art and induſtry of men; elſe as we came naked into the world, we might always continue ſo; our food does not grow

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without induſtry, nor is our raiment natural to us, as it is to the beaſts, or that which clothes the lillies; the birds ſow not, neither do they ſpin, but we have need of theſe things, *Mat.* vi. 32. God has laid up a treaſure in nature, but men muſt dig for it, and improve it by art in the ſweat of their brows; and he has ſo parcel'd out the uſeful conveniencies of life, ſome in one country and ſome in another, on purpoſe to make men buſineſs by trade and commerce; and has annexed thoſe duties to every relation, which will unavoidably find them ſufficient employment. Tho' buſineſs be of various kinds, ſome more ſpeculative and others more laborious, yet without the generality being concerned in ſecular affairs man either could not ſubſiſt at all, or in no more decorum than the wild beaſts.

2. WITHOUT ſome ſuch buſineſs man would be a burden to himſelf. Human nature in the groſs and animal life is too frail to be wholly and only converſant with God and the immediate duties of worſhip. The higher we can attain to this, the more excellent it is, but to be wholly ſo is far above the abilities of this imperfect ſtate. If for one hour's

hour's watching with Chriſt he found the flesh too weak, how much leſs able is it to be always intent upon ſpiritual matters? It is indeed our infirmity, and often our ſin, that we are not more intent; yet not wholly ſo, for we are not deſigned by God in this ſtate of diſtance wholly for contemplation. SERM. IX.

THOSE creatures, who are always beholding his face, are placed in greater nearneſs to his glorious preſence, and in circumſtances more advantageous than ours. This is plain ſince man in his firſt innocence was not ſo intirely called to a devotional life, but that he was to be employed in ſome manual labour, even in paradiſe *Gen.* ii. 15. Such who have pretended religion to conſiſt in being retired from all worldly buſineſs, have generally only nouriſhed fleſhly pleaſures, ſloth, and eaſe, and inſtead of ſerving God better have juſtly incurred *Pharaoh*'s cenſure of *Iſrael*, that they only ſought idleneſs; as is too apparently the caſe of ſo many monaſteries and nunneries. It is then neceſſary to prevent man's miſery, that God has mercifully appointed him ſome temporal buſineſs, and has twiſted that and religion together.

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II. I OBSERVE, that it is commendable to be induſtrious in managing this buſineſs, *Prov.* xxvii. 23. We ſhould not be negligent and ſluggiſh in our affairs, but active and diligent in them. For

1. IT is for the good of the community or public, which is advantaged by the diligence of its members. We are bound to ſeek the proſperity of the country wherein we live, and ſo we ſhall have peace in the peace thereof, *Jer.* xxix. 5, 7.

LET the kingdom be the better for you, and contribute to its improvement and proſperity, and be not uſeleſs burdens to it. It is by improvement in arts and much traffic, that a kingdom thrives, and this cannot be but by the laborioufneſs of the inhabitants, as may be ſeen by the proſperity of a ſmall neighbouring country, which by the univerſal and incredible diligence of its inhabitants is become the chief maſters of trade, while many rich popiſh countries, as *Spain* and *Italy*, are ſunk into penury by reaſon that ſo many religious drones are harboured in their monaſteries, and ſo many idle days obſerved.

THIS

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THIS is ſo evident, that idleneſs among the *Athenians* ſubjected the offender to a proſecution at law, as an injury to the commonwealth, and they made inquiry of each man and woman, *quâ arte ſe alerent.* It is obſervable, the queſtion which *Pharaoh* put to *Joſeph*'s brethren at their coming into *Egypt* Gen. xlvii. 3. *What is your occupation?* ſuppoſing no man to be without ſome occupation or other.

2. IT is good for a man's own family. Religion furthers that inſtinct of nature, that we ſhould provide for our children and thoſe of our own houſe, 2 *Cor.* xii. 14. 1 *Tim.* v. 8. He, who has others dependent on him, is bound to be at pains and care, that he may be a benefactor to them. He, who in ſuch circumſtances is idle and prodigal, is barbarouſly cruel, and ſucks the very blood of his off-ſpring, ſacrificing the comfort of their whole life to his preſent eaſe and ſloth; for tho' it be not our duty to ſtudy greatneſs for our poſterity, yet we ſhould endeavour to leave them in a capacity for uſefulneſs, and out of the way of ſtrong temptations and diſtreſs. The wife, the children, and ſervants reap many advantages, and fare the better for

SERM. IX. for the maſter's diligence and care. See how *Solomon* commends the virtuous woman's diligence this way, *She looketh well to the ways of her houſhold, and eateth not the bread of idleneſs*, Prov. xxxi. 27.

3. IT is very neceſſary for the relief of others. Every man ought to aſpire after ſome capacity of being a benefactor; and tho' he have enough for himſelf and family, yet by the laws of Chriſtianity he is bound to labour for the poor, according to the advice and example of St. *Paul*, who exhorts the *Epheſians to labour, working with their hands the thing which is good, that they might have to give to him that needeth*, Epheſ. iv. 28. and to the ſame *Epheſians* he appeals for his own practice, *that his hands had miniſter'd to his neceſſities and to them that were with him; that he had ſhown them all things, how that labouring they ought to ſupport the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive. Acts* xx. 34, 35. This will be a double charity both in giving our own, and alſo in beſtowing our pains to get it, ſo that tho' it may be but a few pence we can compaſs, yet whoever in ſuch caſe gives it, ſhall meet

meet with the approbation of our lord and maſter, *Mark* xii. 44. SERM. IX.

4. IT is good upon a religious account.

(1.) AS ſuch diligence is very pleaſing to God, when it is conſcientiouſly performed. To mind our own buſineſs and to improve the circumſtances, which providence has placed us in, is itſelf a part of religion, ſo that a Chriſtian may as comfortably be ſurprized by death at the plough or the loom, as on his knees; in his ſhop, as in the temple. This is eſpecially true of thoſe, who are under particular ties to diligence, as is the caſe of ſervants to others, whoſe diligent fidelity ſhall be rewarded by the great judge, as ſervice to the Lord, *Col.* iii. 23. while lazineſs and ſlothful negligence is ſuch a crime, as will be interpreted no leſs than the not fearing of God.

(2.) AS it prevents the dreadful ſnares of idleneſs, which are ſo fatal to religion: It was the ſin of *Sodom*, and a great one too, ſo ſays the prophet *Ezekiel* chap. xvi. ver. 49. *Behold this was the iniquity of thy ſiſter Sodom, abundance of idleneſs was in her and in her daughters, neither did ſhe ſtrengthen the hand of the poor and needy.* Idle perſons are generally diſorderly,

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derly, *There are ſome*, ſays the apoſtle, *who walk among you diſorderly, working not at all, but are buſy bodies*, 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 11. Such are not only uſeleſs but troubleſome, expoſed to all wicked companies, and ſenſual games, to impertinent curioſities and factions. It is the nurſe of luſt and wickedneſs, yet into this they muſt ſink, who have nothing to do, or do not mind their buſineſs; they will wander into evil, who do not abide with God in ſome honeſt calling, 1 *Cor.* vii. 20. It is as profitable for the ſoul, as it is healthful for the body, for it prevents maladies in both.

UPON theſe conſiderations it is no wonder the ſcripture ſhould ſo ſtrongly urge diligence; thus the apoſtle charges the *Theſſalonians*, *That they ſtudy to be quiet, to do their own buſineſs, and to work with their own hands, as he had commanded them.* 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 11. and in his inſtructions to *Titus*, he wills him to affirm conſtantly, *that they who believe in God, ſhould be careful to maintain good works*, καλῶν ἔργων προΐστασθαι *Tit.* iii. 8. Some think, that the word προΐστασθαι imports they ſhould be leading workmen, or artiſts at their trade; ſo in ver. 14. (where the ſame expreſſion is uſed) *Let ours alſo learn to maintain good*

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good works for neceſſary uſes, that they be not unfruitful, is underſtood to denote the following ſome honeſt trade.

I may the more ſafely urge this diligence in an uſeful calling, as yours is, than in ſome others. Some trades are ſo trifling and vain, ſo inſignificant and fooliſh, that a wiſe man would not chuſe to ſpend his time in that, which contributes ſo little to the common good; but ſuch employments, as concern the ſupport of life, *i. e.* food or raiment, are the moſt uſeful and neceſſary of all manual trades; and when a man knows he both relieves himſelf, and benefits others, with ſo much greater ſatisfaction and ſafety he may be diligent in ſuch a calling.

I proceed now to conſider the encouragement mentioned in the text,

1. SUCH are likely to proſper and riſe in the world, whereas the contrary will be the caſe of the ſlothful and idle. *He becometh poor, that dealeth with a ſlack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich,* Prov. x. 4. *The hand of the diligent ſhall bear rule, but the ſlothful ſhall be under tribute,* Prov. xii. 24. To thrive is the natural tendency of pains and labour.

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labour. He that ſeeks will find, while the other loſeth and waſteth his ſubſtance. *He that is ſlothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waſter*, *Prov.* xviii. 9. And again, *Prov.* xxiv. 30—34. *I went by the field of the ſlothful and by the vineyard of the man void of underſtanding, and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the ſtone wall thereof was broken down: So ſhall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.* Diligence is a quality ſo uſeful, as may juſtly recommend to the moſt honourable offices of truſt; all will be ready to covet ſuch an one for their ſervant.

As this is the natural, ſo is it likewiſe the moral effect, as may be ſeen by comparing theſe with chap. x. ver. 22. *The bleſſing of the Lord it maketh rich*; which implies that God is ready to bleſs ſuch abundantly, that as they have ſown, ſo likewiſe they ſhould reap: He multiplies talents to the laborious, *For unto every one that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance; but from him that hath not ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath.* *Mat.* xxv. 29.

2. IT is intimated, that this is an honourable way of riſing; more noble than to be

be enriched by ſome free undeſerved donation. So that however ſome fooliſh people may be apt to look upon ſuch with an air of contempt, as riſing from little; yet if it have been in a fair juſt and ingenuous way, without ſordid means or unwarrantable methods, there ſeems not a more creditable advancement in the world, provided it be borne humbly and decently. We praiſe the lands, which yield great increaſe, and the trees, which bear plenty of fruit; why then ſhould not the community eſteem them as the beſt members, who produce and improve moſt to the common ſtock? But I muſt not leave this without a caution or two, which if obſerved, I know no harm but good in your great diligence.

FIRST, Withhold not from God what is due to him, *Deut.* viii. 10—18. *When thou haſt eaten and art full, thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he, that giveth thee power to get wealth.* Let not your particular callings interfere with your general one as Chriſtians; this is always to be firſt prefer'd. It is very ill when men are ſo intent upon their worldly gains, as to neglect God and religion, or treat it ſlothfully, ſo as to hinder ſecret and family worſhip. It will be

but

SERM. IX. but a poor excuſe, when God ſhall challenge you for living in eſtrangement from him, to ſay you were buſy in your trade. Oh ſirs! will any of you have the face to ſay it at laſt for an excuſe, or will your conſcience accept it as one, that you had not leiſure to be ſaved, that you had not time to mind your ſalvation?

AGAIN, give the poor their due, according to the apoſtle's exhortation, *Let every one lay by him in ſtore, as God has proſpered him.* 1 *Cor.* xvi. 2. that they may ſhare in your ſucceſs, and praiſe God together with you, that ſo it may appear all your pains were not with carnal views and ſelfiſh deſigns.

AGAIN, ſee that your aims be good and holy. It is baſe not only *for a miniſter* to make worldly lucre the principal aim of his function, but *in any other calling* it is the ſame corruption to proſtitute our lives and ſtrength to ſuch a mean ultimate end, as merely to be rich and full. Let therefore all your diligence be with this view, for your better ſerving and honouring God, your doing good to others, and for the public benefit, as well as your own. Remember time is ſhort, and death and judgment near at hand, that you have better meat to labour

labour for, that you have greater buſineſs to mind, and more important accounts to make up; Remember, that you belong to another body and family, namely, that of the houſhold of faith. Let your converſation therefore be in heaven, and your affections on things above, and your trade and buſineſs be ſanctified by prayers and integrity; as thoſe who are willing to quit all their employment and gain at God's ſudden call in hopes of a treaſure incorruptible in that heavenly paradiſe, where no curſe ſhall enter, and where we may feaſt without the ſweat of our brows. Shall we be diligent ſervants to the world, and not more ſo for God? Happy the diligent man, who is ſo in his religious buſineſs, who ſhall ſtand at laſt, not before earthly kings, but before the great king of kings in glory, as the angels now do. SERM. IX.

AGAIN, let no earneſt ſollicitude for gain abate a ſpirit of love and union among you. I know nothing is more common than envy at others ſucceſs in the ſame occupation, ſince *Abram*'s and *Lot*'s herdſmen could not forbear ſtrife. Many occaſions will probably be adminiſtred, but as you are a corporate united body, this would be unſeemly on that

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account, as well as on the ſcore of Chriſtianity. Unity is the beauty of every brother-hood, and the moſt obvious meaſure of its proſperity; for if there be any advantage in being thus aſſociated in one body, (as it is to be ſuppoſed there is, elſe why do men unite into companies?) diſſenſion diſappoints all, and when envy, jealouſy, and revenge begin to influence counſels, and intermix therewith, there is no longer either intereſt or comfort in ſuch a divided body. Who therefore is there of any public ſpirit, that would not ſuffer ſome loſs and damage to purchaſe unity and peace?

FROM what has been ſaid I ſhall only make two or three inferences.

1. LET this teach us to hate idleneſs, *i. e.* the doing nothing at all, or the not doing it in a manner proportioned to our abilities and opportunities. The wiſe man with contempt refers ſuch to the provident ant, *Go to the ant thou ſluggard*, Prov. vi. 6. Ah wretched creature, whoſe reaſon ſerves thee not to ſo much purpoſe as the inſtinct of that little inſect! Such perſons ought to be loathſome to ſociety, who are as mere drones in it; they ſhould according to the Apoſtle's advice be ſhunned,

ſhunned, and put to ſhame 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 14. They deſerve to be uſed, as *Philip* of *Macedon* did by two uſeleſs ſubjects, he made one to run out of the country, and the other to drive him, and by that means got ſhut of them both: Tho' indeed it were to be wiſhed, that ſome common vineyard or laboratory was provided, into which thoſe might be ſent, who ſtand idle in the market-place; and then if they ſhould refuſe to work, they would deſervedly ſuffer. SERM. IX.

2. LET this excite you to encourage diligence in others,

FIRST negatively, by frowning upon the idle, and chooſing rather to employ the induſtrious. If you take your work from the idle and negligent, and give it to the diligent, you will therein imitate the wiſdom and righteouſneſs of the great Lord of all, who took the one talent from the ſlothful ſervant, and gave it to him, who had improved ten talents, *Mat.* xxv. 28.

SECONDLY, By allowing the diligent a ſuitable recompence for their pains, that they may be reaſonable ſharers in the profit. It is a great diſcouragement to induſtry, when after all the hard pains a man can take, his earnings

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will ſcarcely ſubſiſt him in a tolerable manner. To be liberal to ſuch is an act of the greateſt charity, becauſe it both relieves them, and keeps them in an honeſt courſe, and tho' it may not be called charity by men, yet it will be the more highly eſteemed ſo by God. *For the Lord will plead the cauſe of the poor, and ſpoil the ſoul of thoſe that ſpoiled them*; *Prov.* xxii. 23. and none have more poor to deal with than you have.

3. BE not then weary of well-doing in theſe maters. Many of you have been diligent very greatly of late years, and have found the temporal ſucceſs of it, as well as the kingdom in general; and this ſhould encourage you ſtill to go on. It has been indeed to the envy of your neighbours, and has brought you under ſome very unwelcome reſtraints as to your trade in particular *, but you have reaſon to be thankful, that after all you have not been wholly without incouragement to your induſtry; and ſince it is a favourable bleſſing of providence attending diligence, which makes it proſperous, who knows what ways may yet be found to make the iſſue far better than is feared?

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* This probably relates to ſome laws made at that time in *England*, prohibiting the exportation of their manufacture.

I will conclude all with the apoſtle's wiſh, 2 *Cor.* ix. 10. May the good God, that miniſtreth ſeed to the ſower both miniſter bread for your food, and multiply the ſeed ſown! May he increaſe your diligence and ſucceſs, and ſo bleſs your induſtry, that you may never want incouragement, but being enriched in every thing may abound more and more!

SERMON X.

The worſhip of God founded on the principles of reaſon.

ACTS xvii. 25.

Neither is he worſhipped with men's hands as tho' he needed any thing, ſeeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.

THE worſhip of the great God is the natural homage, which a reaſonable creature pays to the ſupreme Being his Creator, his abſolute Lord, his owner and benefactor, what reaſon clearly dictates, and revelation poſitively injoins and earneſtly inculcates; what is the daily employment of every good man in this life of temptation and miſery, and the great buſineſs of the bleſſed in the regions of joy and triumph. Being a

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matter ſo ſolemn and of ſo vaſt importance it concerns us to attend it with wiſdom and caution, as well as with ſome ſerious attention, that we may not offer the ſacrifice of fools inſtead of a reaſonable ſervice.

SINCE the direct deſign of worſhipping God is to honour and exalt him the moſt we can, it ought to be performed with ſuch ſuitable conceptions of him, on ſuch principles and ends, and with ſuch becoming thoughts, as may truly expreſs a great eſteem and veneration for him. It is therefore highly needful to guard againſt all ſuch falſe conceptions of the object of our ſupreme adoration as tend any way to vilify or diſparage him, leſt, while we ſeem to reverence him with our bended knee, we diſhonour him by our injurious thoughts, among which nothing can be more plainly ſo, than to conceive of him as benefitted or aſſiſted by our ſervice, as if we worſhipped him for his advantage as well as our own, and as if indigence, inſtead of excellence, were the ground of our adoration to him; whereas it is quite the contrary, we come to an infinite being, the firſt, the greateſt, and the beſt of all beings, who is above

above all want or need whatever, which is the Apoſtle's caution in the text. SERM. X.

THE words are a part of one of the moſt important and remarkable diſcourſes in the book of the *Acts*; in ſeveral others we find the Apoſtles reaſoning with the *Jews* upon the principles of their own religion and law, in this St. *Paul* is arguing with the *Gentiles* upon the principles of reaſon and natural religion, and the teſtimony of their own writers. He was now encountering with two famous ſects of their philoſophers, the *Epicureans* and the *Stoics*, who brought him to the common hall of *Athens* or the public place of judicature, whither reſorted the magiſtrates, philoſophers, orators, and other eminent men, among whom St. *Paul* having liberty to ſpeak, and being ſorely grieved at their groſs idolatry and abſurd notions of the deity, he endeavours to reclaim them firſt to right notions of natural religion, as a preparative to Chriſtianity, which is founded upon it and a noble improvement of it; in which matter as he acquitted himſelf with admirable wiſdom in his forceable argument on the point, ſo it is worth reflecting on the great prudence and dexterity of his whole conduct, before he came

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to the point of direct and proper Chriſtianity.

HE had a long time burned with zeal ver. 16. but reſtrained himſelf, only diſputing with the Jews and Proſelytes, and occaſionally in the market-place with ſuch as he met, where ſome of the philoſophers ſects falling into argument with him, they led him away unto the public court, a place more convenient for hearing his new doctrine. Thus he had a fair occaſion given him to reaſon with them, but yet he did not, when his ſpirit was provoked within him, break out, as ſome, in fits of wild enthuſiaſtic zeal, into acts of rage and violence, did not throw down their idols, or pollute their altars or temples, nor run about with outrageous reproaches and execrations, more apt to provoke than to convince, but waited a fair occaſion, which, when it offered, we obſerve with what diſcretion and temper his zealous mind governed itſelf in his ſpeech ver. 22. *Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are as it were too ſuperſtitious* * : *Superſtition* was a ſofter word than *idolatry*, and yet it is but comparatively expreſt, not abſolutely ſo, but *too much* given to the worſhip of Dæmons, and to

* ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους.

to this is joined a ſoftning word ὡς, *as it were* too ſuperſtitious: And tho' *Athens* was noted for idolatry ver. 16. having as many idols, ſay ſome, as all *Greece* beſides, and near as great plenty of gods as men, yet ſee how handſomely and modeſtly the Apoſtle introduces his proof of that charge ver. 23. *As I paſſed by I found an altar,* &c. SERM. X.

THEY could not here perceive any formed deſign in St. *Paul* to ſubvert their religion, that he came poſſeſt with any prejudice againſt their well-known groſs idolatry beforehand, or that he had been prying and making inquiries, ſince he came, to furniſh himſelf with matter of accuſation, but as if it were an occaſional accidental diſcovery, *As I paſſed by I beheld,* &c. I caſt my eye on your devotions, and obſerved an altar with this inſcription, *To the unknown God,* and hence ſlides naturally into a diſcourſe concerning the One God, who made the world, whoſe immenſity and ſpirituality, he aſſerts, and proves from their own principles, and that therefore their images could be no juſt repreſentation of him, who was the parent of men, more noble beings than they. By this wiſe and calm method he neither expoſed himſelf to their

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their rage, nor loſt the opportunity of preaching the goſpel with ſome ſucceſs.'

THE words are liable to a double interpretation; they are either, 1. A caution againſt that ſort of worſhip *with men's hands*; or 2. Againſt wrong views and conceptions in all worſhip of God whatever. The firſt ſenſe amounts to this; God is not to be worſhipped with material worſhip, that is to ſay, with temples, or altars, or images, and ſacrifices, or ſuch groſs corporeal furniture, as are prepared by human art or hands, leſt it carry an unworthy reflexion on him as an indigent being, who needed ſuch conveniencies. But this I do not take to be St. *Paul*'s meaning, becauſe the great God had required to be ſo worſhipped in a temple with altars and ſacrifices, the works of men's hands, without ſtanding in need of them, and therefore it could not be ſaid, that ſuch worſhip was wholly diſagreeable to him, or that it implied his want of an houſe to dwell in, or fat beaſts for his ſuſtenance, or ſervants for his guard; and altho' this way of worſhip was laid aſide under the Chriſtian religion, yet it was not becauſe it was altogether unworthy in itſelf. I therefore rather think the words were intended as

a caution in all our worſhip not to entertain any unworthy thoughts of God; as if he had ſaid, This great being is to be worſhipped by us, but let us not imagine, that it is for any want of his, or that he ſtands in need of it. SERM. X.

Two things are here to be treated of,

I. THAT we are not to worſhip the great God, as if or becauſe he needs it.

II. THAT tho' he does not need it, yet ſtill it is our duty to pay him this worſhip.

I. THE great God muſt not be conceived of by us as ſtanding in need of our worſhip. This is not an impertinent caution conſidering the ignorance of mankind in things of religion: The apoſtle thought it proper at *Athens*, for tho' the philoſophers and wiſe-men among the Gentiles deſpiſed ſuch mean thoughts of the deity, and had ſlight thoughts of their idols and ſacrifices notwithſtanding their joining in the common practice, yet the vulgar were ready to ſuppoſe their Gods wanted theſe accommodations of an habitation to dwell in, and ſacrifices to refreſh them, and perfumes to gratify them. And indeed it ſeems, as if ſome among the *Jews*, who ſerved the true God

SERM. X. and had his law to enlighten them, were very nigh to the ſame fooliſh conceptions, as appears from God's rebuke *Pſalm* l. 12, 13. *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; Will I eat the fleſh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?* And tho' it appears from ver. 14. that the more ſpiritual worſhip of thankſgiving and vows of obedience, (which is the caſe of goſpel-worſhip,) are not ſo likely to favour ſuch fooliſh conceits, yet we ſee it not impoſſible for weak minds, if uninſtructed, in another kind to imagine, that God needs our worſhip, the honour and applauſe of our praiſes, or needs to be informed of our wants, or to be awakened and rouſed by our ſollicitations, or benefitted by our obedience, and therefore the ſcriptures carefully guard againſt ſuch miſtakes, *Job* xxxv. 6, 7. *If thou ſinneſt, what doſt thou againſt him? or if thy tranſgreſſion be multiplied, what doſt thou unto him?* We muſt not entertain ſuch a thought in our approaches to God; and this appears,

1. FROM the abſolute perfection of the ſupreme being, who is not capable of either benefit or hurt from any. If he needed any thing, eſpecially what depends on the will of another, he were not abſolutely perfect, be-

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cauſe he, who wants, may become more complete than he is, and he, who may be ſo, is not ſuch already; nay, he muſt be very poor, who lacks ſuch things as we are able to give. Now abſolute perfection is neceſſarily included in the juſt and rational notion of the Supreme Being, ſince he, who is the neceſſary unoriginate Being and the origin of all good, muſt needs be all-perfect, and to ſay we could conceive a better being is in effect to deny him; it therefore follows, that he needs not our ſervice to ſupply any defect in his happineſs; for tho' creatures are in ſome ſenſe ſaid to be perfect in their kind, and yet are not ſelf-ſufficient, but receive their fulneſs from God, this is becauſe they are but comparatively not abſolutely perfect, as he is, who has all goodneſs in himſelf, to which no real addition can be made. Natural light taught heathens to reaſon thus; hence *Seneca de beneficiis* l. 4. c. 3. ſpeaking againſt giving with a proſpect of requital ſays, By this rule the gods ſhould give nothing, *Illis enim in omnia natura ſua ſufficit, plenoſque præſtat*, for their nature ſupplies them with a full ſufficiency of all things. SERM. X.

2. FROM his being the author and giver of all things, ſo the text adds, *Seeing*

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ing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, and again, *In him we live, move, and have our beings.* From his exuberant goodneſs it is we are and have whatever we enjoy; if he were not therefore himſelf full, he would not thus overflow, nor is it likely, that he ſhould be a needy receiver, who is to all and in all the common and liberal benefactor, who ſince he gives all, can receive nothing but what he firſt gave, and as he gave it without any diminution, ſo it cannot be returned to him with any advantage: He can no more need it, than the bright and glorious Sun needs the reflexion of its own beams, or that of the moon's borrowed light; for God is the father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. I may add,

3. FROM the nature of our worſhip, which can ſignify nothing to him. All corporeal oblations are low and mean and nothing to him, who is a ſpirit, and whoſe is the earth and all the fulneſs thereof. Spiritual and rational ſervice is always more excellent and pleaſing to him, but what does it all amount to more than a ſlender token of our good-will, but to him inſignificant? In

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our prayers we are profeſſed beggars, in our hearing we are learners, in the one we are ſupplicants on our knees, in the other diſciples at his feet, in both we are receivers. SERM X.

PRAISE ſeems the moſt generous branch of worſhip, which aims at his honour, but what is it but the empty good wiſhes and opinion of deſpicable worms? Weak and ſilly mortals are tickled with commendation and flattering praiſe among their equals or rivals, but the great God has no rival nor emulation. What would we value the good opinion of a worm or a fly? much leſs are we to him, before whom all nations are as nothing *Iſai.* xl. 17. What can we ſay to his advantage, who, when we have ſaid all we can, fall vaſtly ſhort of what is due to him? and are ſo ſtraitned in our conceptions and words, that we rather diminiſh from his glory than add to it, which is far above our reach. *Nehem.* ix. 5. The Pſalmiſt makes the challenge *Pſal.* cvi. 2. *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can ſhew forth all his praiſe?* which none can anſwer, tho' with the greateſt genius and eloquence, no, nor with what is beyond it, the greateſt devotion.

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UPON the whole, ſo far is the glorious object of our adoration and ſervice from being better'd by our devotions, or being beholden to us for them, that we ought to deem it an act of great condeſcenſion, that he will at all regard or accept them, or even pardon the folly and defects which attend them, *Pſal.* cxiii. 6. *Who humbleth himſelf to behold the things that are in heaven, or that are on earth*, much more, if he will reward them with his bleſſings. Inſtead of ſuch wondrings as in *Iſai.* lviii. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted, and thou ſeeſt not? Wherefore have we afflicted our ſouls, and thou takeſt no knowledge?* rather let us be in *David*'s amazement *Pſal.* viii. 4. *What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the ſon of man that thou viſiteſt him?*

IF he give us leave to maintain this ſort of intercourſe with him, to take his name into our unclean lips, to lift up our eyes to his holy habitation, if he invite us to addreſs him with the confidence of children towards a father, and will ſay, the prayer or praiſe of the upright is his delight, the reaſon is not, that he has received any thing he needed, but only what for other reaſons he has required; which

leads me to the ſecond point to be conſidered, namely, SERM. X.

II. THAT ſtill God is to be worſhipped by us, tho' not for any ſuch reaſon as if he needed it.

THE Apoſtle had no deſign to alienate mens minds from all worſhip of God, which is the abſurd inference ſome have been prone to draw from the premiſſes, *viz.* That ſince the Supreme Being is above being affected with what we can ſay or do to him, ſince infinite wiſdom needs not our information, nor infinite goodneſs our preſſing ſollicitations, they ſee not what rational ground there can be for worſhipping him, who is above all worſhip: But this is a very unjuſt way of arguing, and proceeds upon this abſurd principle, that indigence and not excellence is the only true ground of offering worſhip to our ſuperior; whereas worſhip being not a benefaction, but a reverential expreſſion of our reſpect, the higheſt degree of it is proper for him, who leaſt needs it, and is fartheſt above it, and may appear to be a reaſonable ſervice on many accounts.

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THE goſpel revelation, which has reduced the worſhip of God to greater ſimplicity and ſpirituality, has made huge claims to it. There we read, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and ſuch worſhippers the Father ſeeks*, *John* iv. 23. and that all good Chriſtians are conſtituted *an holy prieſthood to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. But this is not ſuppoſed to be a rule to thoſe, who argue upon the foot of reaſon only, and yet upon this foot the voice of nature and conſent of nations have juſtified and required the worſhip of the deity, and, as *Jonah*'s mariners, however diverſified as to their object, yet every one calls upon their God.

THAT it may appear to be rational and good, let us conſider the deſign and uſe of it.

1. IT is a juſt and becoming acknowledgment of our dependence on the Supreme Being, and of his ſuper-eminent excellency and dominion.

THIS is the nature of worſhip to acknowledge reſpectfully the ſuperiority of another. Now it cannot be denied, that this is due to Almighty God, who made us and is the great arbiter

arbiter of our preſent and future condition, and it is as becoming, as it is juſt, to give viſible marks and ſigns of this. An ingenuous mind meeting with one of tranſcendent excellency, with whom it dares not pretend competition, is naturally prompted to ſtoop down in reverential acknowledgment, as naturally as we bow down under a great weight, and we have reaſon to think God is pleaſed with what is ſo ſeemly and righteous in itſelf, tho' it no otherwiſe affect him. SERM. X.

PARENTS are not unwiſe or rigorous in requiring ſome marks of reſpect, which they have no value at all for but as it is ſeemly for their children to give them, ſo the God of order requires us to do what is fitting and orderly, and therefore not in vain, altho' it ſhould be otherwiſe of no ſignification; he demands his right for righteouſneſs ſake, tho' he wants it not. It is decent and right in us to bow down before the Lord our maker, to proclaim him our liberal benefactor, to whom we owe our innumerable benefits paſt, and on whoſe boundleſs power and goodneſs we depend for all to come, to recognize his ſovereignty by laying ourſelves and all our deſires at his feet with humble reſignation. For tho' we cannot hurt

SERM. X. him, yet we may wrong him by our neglect, and may pleaſe him by what is right, tho we cannot benefit him by our moſt ſolemn homage.

2. THE worſhip of God is an excellent and powerful means of making us better, of purifying our minds, and reforming our lives.

OUR greateſt motives to holineſs and virtue are drawn from the nature and will of God, he is both the reaſon and the rule of holineſs, *Be ye holy as I am holy*, and *Be ye holy, for I am holy*, 1 *Pet.* i. 15, 16. Therefore the deeper impreſſions we make of him upon our minds, the more ſerious and wiſe we are likely to be; and this the regular worſhip of him greatly aſſiſts us in, for it is the moſt immediate and cloſe way of converſing with him. We then place our ſelves in his awful preſence to commune with him, and to direct our thoughts, deſires, and words, not tranſiently but with ſolemnity, to him, who is not far from every one of us.

CONTEMPLATION and conſideration of God and of our ſelves are the uſual way of becoming wiſe and good, and here they are, if ever, moſt likely to be fixt by recollecting our roving thoughts and wandering deſires to come into

into a due attendance upon our Creator's praiſe. What good impreſſions muſt this naturally make upon us? Will not the remembrance of God's glorious majeſty, whom we adore as our almighty maker and righteous judge, awake a reverential dread, and lay us in humble abaſement at his feet in the ſenſe of our many tranſgreſſions, and inſpire us with holy reſolutions to do better *Iſai.* chap. vi? Can we make grateful ackhowledgments of his many favours from day to day, and ſtill pray with hope, that his compaſſionate goodneſs will pity, pardon, and bleſs us beyond what we can aſk or think, and not feel ſome ingenuous ſenſe of our obligations to him? Can we hear his laws and threatnings, and not feel our conſciences concerned? Or bewail our ſins, and not be convinced we ought to forſake them? In a word it is not eaſy to conceive it poſſible, that men ſhould addreſs themſelves to ſuch work, retire from the hurry and amuſements of the world to ſolemn tranſactions between God and themſelves in ſecret; or ſpend an hour or two in an aſſembly to ſpeak or hear of God, of his laws, his promiſes and threatnings, of death and judgment, and an approaching eternity, with-

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out ſome good effect, ſome good thoughts and reſolutions, ſome freſh ſenſe of God on their minds, ſome reſtraints on their evil inclinations, or ſome good inſtruction receiv'd; all which tend to promote their reformation and amendment.

HOWEVER it certainly improves the piety and virtues of good men to be thus often exerciſed, drawing near to the Supreme Being, beholding his glory in his temple, and getting into ſome nearer conjunction with the eternal fountain of light and life, of grace and glory. They feel their minds hereby raiſed, their thoughts heightned, their love inflamed with holy ardours, their good deſigns and reſolutions ſtrengthen'd, their hopes revived, and themſelves ready to aſcend towards heaven in the earneſt aſpirations of a devout ſpirit; and thus they renew their ſtrength by waiting on the Lord; and by thus nouriſhing the principles of virtue, and keeping lively ſentiments of God in their minds are prepared for every good work in all the relations of life, and invite alſo the divine aids, which are more reaſonably expected by ſuch as ſeek them. And is not this a ſufficient reaſon for wor-

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ſhipping God, even tho' there were no expreſs command for it? SERM. X.

3. THE worſhip of God (eſpecially public worſhip in united aſſemblies) greatly contributes to keep up the common reverence for God and his laws in the world, and ſo is a public benefit to mankind.

IF religion and conſcience in men are of any uſe to the world by reſtraining their evil luſts and paſſions, and encouraging them to do well, if the ſenſe and apprehenſion of an almighty and all-ſeeing God be that, which moſtly keeps the world in awe, and is the chief ſupport of juſtice, truth, and virtue among men, then is it moſt neceſſary, that we ſtudy to preſerve and promote the higheſt reverential eſteem of him amongſt all. And which way can we do this, but by declaring our own humble ſenſe of him as of a great and holy God, whom we fear and reverence as at an infinite diſtance above us? Which way can we expreſs this our veneration for him, but by our words and actions? Our obedience conformable to his will is indeed often a more effectual and difficult proof of it, but yet it is more remote, and not ſo viſible and direct as in the ſolemnities of worſhip.

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To ſee a ſociety of all ranks high and low aſſembling to bow down with ſerioufneſs and humility before God their maker, with eyes and hands lift up to heaven the habitation of his holineſs, imploring with great importunity his favour as better than life, profeſſing a ſubmiſſive reſignation to his ſovereign will, and proclaiming his great and glorious name, his boundleſs excellencies, his marvellous works, and lofty praiſes; to ſee him thus greatly feared in the aſſemblies of his ſaints, muſt needs ſhew him to be a great and mighty king, and will put others upon the inquiry, What means this peculiar unuſual homage? Have any earthly potentates with all their ambition obtained ſuch marks of a general and ſerious eſteem? Oh, who is this king of glory? the Lord of hoſts. *Pſal.* xxiv. 10.

How many would in a manner loſe all ſenſe of God, if there were no open worſhip of him, as ſeveral have done by an utter neglect thereof? If the generality of the ignorant do not quite forget God, if there be any regard paid to his laws or honour, it has, I believe, been principally preſerved by the ſolemnities of his worſhip; and fearing God is the way to keep his commandments. There

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is a ſort of ſympathy in minds, what we ſee others ſlight, we are apt to diſregard, what they much honour, we reſpect; ſo it is here, when the ſpirit of devotion ſpreads over a ſociety, one who comes in to behold, will it is likely be ſo moved as to fall down and worſhip, ſaying God is of a truth among them. 1 *Cor.* xiv. 25. SERM. X.

FOR theſe reaſons we worſhip God, and he has made it the means of commerce with heaven; and what is there in all this ridiculous or abſurd for any to laugh or mock at? It is a way of honouring God peculiar to reaſonable creatures, and is therefore a principal duty of morality.

INDEED under the goſpel we have ſome ritual worſhip in Baptiſm and the Lord's-ſupper, but ſtill it is the rational ſpiritual worſhip, which runs through the whole, it is prayer, praiſe, and holy vows are the ſubſtance of theſe, which are occaſional and external ſigns to direct our minds, and to excite us to thoſe parts of worſhip. If therefore worſhip in general be a reaſonable thing, it cannot be unreaſonable, that God ſhould determine circumſtances and manner as he pleaſes, not for their own value, ſo much as for their ſubſerviency

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ſerviency to more noble ends, which are intrinſically good.

FROM what has been diſcourſed I would make the following inferences.

I. LET us keep up a due eſteem for the worſhip of God, for which I have endeavoured to lay the foundation in your underſtandings from the nature and reaſon of things, as well as from the command of God, which is juſt and good, that you may not preſume on a diſpenſation, as of a mere arbitrary injunction. Think not that it is needleſs for you, becauſe it is not needful to God. Remember the honour of the Almighty is concerned in it, and that you may ſlight and diſpleaſe him, tho' you cannot hurt him; and ſo it is in all other parts of religion, and as other ſins do hurt to men, ſo does the contempt of God's worſhip. Count it not an indifferent thing, but make conſcience of attending his worſhip, tho' there ſhould be worldly danger in it: thus did *Daniel* chap. vi. 10. he would not bear ſuch an affront to God as to neglect the worſhipping him; and the Apoſtle warns Chriſtians not to forbear the aſſembling themſelves together

together *Heb.* x. 25. Let us not ſeek occaſions of excuſing ourſelves, but come with alacrity and forwardneſs, and be ſerious in it as in the moſt important buſineſs, not to divert ourſelves or others, but to check them that are careleſs, as if it were only the amuſement of a vacant hour, to comply with cuſtom, or to hear ſome new notion. Let us by daily worſhip at home habituate our minds to this work, that we may preſerve the ſpirit of devotion, and keep in the ſacred fire on the altar, that it be not to kindle at the ſolemn time of ſacrifice, elſe it will be hard to get an eſtranged mind into a devout frame. Let us not forget our Lord's directions to enter into our cloſets and pray, for which we have continual occaſions. As an encouragement thereto, you will conſider,

1. IT is the peculiar excellency of reaſonable creatures. The reſt of the creation cannot bear ſo noble a part to be active in their maker's praiſe, *Pſal.* cxlv. 10, 11. they offer arguments indeed to us, but we are to improve them. Shall we do no more with all our noble powers than the dumb and inanimate creatures? Shall our peculiar glory our tongue be ſilent?

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2. IT is the appointed way of commerce and intercourſe with God for the procuring his beſt bleſſings. God will give to men liberally, but in a becoming poſture, he on a throne, and we on our knees. A ſenſe of our dependance fits us both for receiving and uſing his mercies, and then he withholds no good thing, but he will have ſome acknowledgment paid to him as the great proprietor. Can we do leſs, or deſire his favours at a cheaper rate?

3. IT is ſo ſuited to the nature and condition of men, that it affords a very grateful reliſh and refreſhment to a virtuous mind. As it is the glory of God, that he is the deſerving ultimate object of our ſupreme adoration and honour, bleſſing and praiſe, reverence, love, and confidence, ſo a good man accounts it his great comfort, that he has ſuch a glorious amiable object to pay his homage to. He is glad he has ſuch a powerful friend to hope in, and apply to in all his wants and miſeries, ſuch a liberal benefactor to praiſe and thank. Where there is a ſpirit of true devotion, the ſolemn tranſaction of worſhip will greatly raiſe and revive, inflame and warm the mind, but this is not to be illuſtra-

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ted but by experience. See it in *David* how ſtrongly he was affected *Pſal.* lxxxiv. 2, 10. *Pſal.* xlii. 1—4. *Pſal.* lxiii. 1. how happy, when in the ſanctuary praiſing God! how vehement in his deſires after it, as the one thing he coveted! How does he bemoan himſelf, when in forced abſence, envying as it were the little birds that dwelt near the altar! Sure there muſt be ſomething in all this. It is the beſt remedy of a burden'd mind, ſince there we ſee a mighty, a wiſe, and a good being, who can do all, and will do what is beſt. SERM. X.

4. IT is a very proper preparative for the work and ſociety of a better world to come. Heaven is a place of perfection in religion, there all are aſſiduous worſhippers, it is their great employment to behold the face of their heavenly father, and to give him praiſe in harmonious concord; but this we ſhall never be fit for, unleſs we be devout frequent worſhippers here, this will tune our ſpirits, and will raiſe and refine us for that bleſſed ſtate, and there it will be a raviſhing entertainment to worſhip, not with lamentations and neceſſary petitions, but with unmingled praiſes and joyful gratitude, to proclaim the majeſty and goodneſs

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goodneſs of that infinite being, to whom they are ſo nearly united: What are all our faint praiſes here to the joyful hallelujahs of them above? Yet it is the deſign of all worſhip, of all religion, both in notion and practice, to prepare us for it; for as God's glory is the laſt end of all, ſo all ſhall end in this, that he be eternally glorified and worſhipped by his reaſonable creation.

II. LET all our concern be ſo to worſhip God as may pleaſe him, and profit ourſelves; in doing which we ſhould obſerve the following directions.

1. LET us worſhip him in ſpirit *John* iv. 24. *Phil.* iii. 3. by which it is not meant to exclude all bodily worſhip; true, it is not ſo abundantly ſuch as under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, there were numerous carnal ordinances, that employed them; but ſome bodily worſhip muſt be joined with ſpiritual, for the very nature of worſhip implies it *Pſal.* xcv. 6. *Acts* x. 25. 1 *Chron.* xxix. 20. and the practice ſhews it *Luke* xxiii. 41. *John* xvii. 1. beſides, it is uſeful as it makes it viſible, and awful, and mutually edifying. When many join, there muſt be words, geſtures, and ſigns; there

there muſt be lips as well as thoughts, *Heb.* xiii. 15. *Col.* iii. 16. Some bodily ſigns are natural, for all ſerious earneſt paſſions appear in the viſage and other tokens; whatever indeed is affected is very improper, but ſo much as is natural is comely. SERM. X.

BUT worſhipping in ſpirit imports,

(1.) ATTENTION of thought, not roving wandering fancies, 1 *Cor.* vii. 35. *Pſalm* lxxxvi. 11. All our thoughts muſt draw to one point, and not be incumbred with worldly cares; we ſhould lay all theſe by, and turn out theſe gueſts, theſe buyers and ſellers from the temple. The underſtanding muſt lead the way in a fixt contemplation of the divine majeſty, deep reflexion on ourſelves, and a ſerious conſideration of the buſineſs we are about.

(2.) INTENTION or earneſtneſs of affection. See *Pſalm* ciii. 1. where the pſalmiſt ſummons in all his powers, and excites them to his creator's praiſe, and calls upon all creatures to aſſiſt therein; thus we read of being *inſtant in prayer*, *Rom.* xii. 12. of being *fervent*, *Jam.* v. 16. *ſtrong cries*, *Heb.* v. 7. not lazy formal cold devotions. Words are not wor-

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ſhip, prayer, or praiſe, but admiration, reverence, humility, love, &c. Eyes and hands lifted up are only outward ſigns of a ſoul aſpiring towards heaven in holy elevations.

NOTHING is more proper than a great and awful ſenſe of the infinite majeſty of God, ſince we come for that end to adore him by humble acknowledgements of his excellency and dominion, *Heb.* xii. 28. Tho' he condeſcends to commune with us, yet no praiſe, no humility is enough to be anſwerable to the object of our adoration. How loftily does the prophet expreſs it, *Iſai.* xl. 17. *Behold, the nations are as the drop of the bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the balance?* See how humble the celeſtial worſhippers are, *Rev.* iv. they caſt down their crowns, and fall proſtrate before him: All our glory and marks of diſtinction are to be given up, when we remember the everlaſting diſtinction between the creatures and the great creator.

2. WE muſt be careful to join to our worſhip purity of heart and life. Devotion is not deſigned to compound for immoralities, as with hypocrites and ſinners. *Prov.* vii. 14. but contrariwiſe to nouriſh and increaſe our virtues,

virtues, *Pſalm* xxiv. 4, 5. If we take the means for the end, we are much miſtaken. God abhors ſuch baſe deſigns, *Iſaiah* i. 11—16. It is mere mockery and diſhonouring the God we pretend to worſhip, when we make it a preface to villany for ſucceſs in our crimes. *They make no conſcience to do evil*, as ſome turn *Prov.* xxi. 7. Let us then with *David* ſay *Pſalm* xxvi. 6. *I will waſh my hands in innocency, and ſo will I compaſs thine altar, O Lord*; then it will anſwer the end, and be a means of making us better. Let us fear to do evil, to defile theſe hands and eyes, which are to be lift up to God in worſhip, theſe lips, which are to utter his praiſes. Methinks this ſhould be a reſtraint on us, The hour of devotion is at hand, I am preſently to addreſs to the great and holy God, how ſhall I do this evil? How ſhall I ſtand on his holy hill? With what face can I pretend reverence and honour for him, and at the ſame time be breaking his law? SERM. X.

3. WE muſt join charity or a benevolent mind and behaviour towards men, void of all rancour, hatred, malice, envy, ſcorn, and every injurious unfriendly diſpoſition, free from injuſtice, violence, fraud, deceit, and

SERM. X. the like, *Pſalm* xv. 2, 3. 1 *Tim.* ii. 8. A diſturbed mind is not fit for that holy employment, it grieves the ſpirit of God, which ſhould aſſiſt our infirmities, a quiet ſerene frame becomes holy humble worſhippers; beſides, God will not own that we love *him*, unleſs we love our brother alſo. We ſhould never forget the words of our bleſſed Saviour, *Mat.* v. 24. *Firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift:* ſo that at ſuch times we ſhould reflect particularly on our behaviour; and thus worſhip will edify and purge us from our mutual miſcarriages. This advice ſerves for all parts of worſhip, 1 *Pet.* ii. 1. but is of excellent uſe in public joint worſhip, in that it is a powerful cement and bond of endearing love among the ſociety, which worſhip the ſame God thro' the ſame mediator, *Pſalm* lv. 14. For this reaſon our alms add value to our devotion, as they are the teſtimony of a benevolent mind, *Acts.* x. 2. compared with ver. 31. and are themſelves a pleaſing ſacrifice, *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16.

4. WE muſt offer up all our worſhip in the name of our one mediator the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, both our prayers *John* xvi. 23. and

our

our praiſes, *Heb.* xiii. 15. and alſo our thankſ- SERM. X.
givings and ſongs, *Col.* iii. 17.

IT is an humbling mark of our unworthineſs, that ſets us at a diſtance ſo far from God. God will not refuſe to hear us, but then it is by one more worthy, who never offended him. It is a ſtrengthening of our confidence to be aſſiſted by ſuch an interceſſor. The world had ſenſible experience of his tender compaſſion on all occaſions; the conſideration of this emboldens us, when the majeſty of the almighty, holy, holy, holy Lord of hoſts is ready to overwhelm us, *Heb.* iv. 15, 16. As Chriſt refuſes none, who come *to him*, *John* vi. 44. ſo God refuſes none, who come *by him*, *Heb.* vii. 25. It is his office, and him God heareth alway. Through him therefore let us have acceſs by one ſpirit to the Father, *Eph.* ii. 18.

SERMON XI.

The nature, end, and design of the Lord's supper.

1 COR. xi. 25.

This do in remembrance of me.

FORASMUCH as we are soon to celebrate the memorials of our Lord Jesus's death at his holy table, I judge it proper from these words to discourse something of the nature of this institution.

THE early corruption and indecencies of some of the church of *Corinth* at these solemnities made it necessary for the Apostle to refer them to the original institution by our Lord himself, teaching us, that we are so far wrong as we deviate from his example and direction:

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rection: And does not the superstition and corruption of these after-days render it again necessary to have recourse to the same rule? There were schisms and uncharitable contentions at it then, so that the Apostle says of their carriage, *This is not to eat the Lord's supper* ver. 20. that is to say, not rightly, not answerable to the design of it, nor to the solemnity of the ordinance: And are there not as great and general occasions of animosity and faction about it now, by straitning the terms of Christian communion, and barring men for not yielding to the test of a particular party? Now this arises from mens forgetting the express and grand end of it, which is common to all, who love our Lord Jesus, and their assigning other ends than Christ intended by it, or at least minding more what are but the remote and accidental uses, than what is the main and express design of it. What that is we are told in the text, *Do this in remembrance of me.*

THE words contain,

I. THE matter of the institution, *This.*

II. THE authority, by which it is injoined, *Do this.*

III. THE end of it, *In remembrance of me.*

I. THE

I. THE matter *This*, as if he had ſaid, This ſame that we are now doing; take bread, break it and eat, take wine, pour it out and drink, giving thanks to God. This is all which St. *Paul* relates of the laſt ſupper; All other circumſtances of perſons, poſture, time, and place he omits, and limits the injunction to the ſubſtantial part of it, which ſhews that Chriſt's meaning was not to tie us up to all the circumſtances of his example, which were indifferent. It is not worth diſputing, whether it muſt be done ſitting, ſtanding, or kneeling, whether with leavened or unleavened bread, ſo much controverted between the *Roman* and *Greek* churches, whether common bread or round cakes, whether in the morning or evening, on a full ſtomach or faſting, or the like. Theſe are no more neceſſary to conſult Chriſt's example about, than about the upper room, the number twelve, and them men only, and other immaterial circumſtances of the firſt inſtitution, which trivial minds may ſpend their ignorant zeal about. No, *Do this* is a command, that we meet and take theſe elements with holy benediction and thanks to God, with the

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the actions of eating and drinking to the end we may commemorate our bleſſed Lord and his death. All this whole act becomes our Lord's body and blood, that is, it figures and repreſents his death, not the bread and wine alone, but thus managed, broken and poured out.

II. THE injunction itſelf *Do this*, I command you, I require you, I deſire you to do it; but of this in the application.

III. THE end or deſign of the inſtitution, *In remembrance of me*. This muſt rule and direct the action, this is the moſt worthy of our conſideration. Here it may not be amiſs to obſerve,

1. THAT the inſtitution is a very plain obvious buſineſs, no dark myſterious matter, but ſet forth with all ſimplicity and eaſineſs to be underſtood, bread broken to repreſent a broken wounded corpſe, and wine poured out to repreſent the ſhedding of blood: True, it has the ſymbolical meaning of ſigns, but then this meaning is expreſſed clearly, and the ſigns are as natural as well can be, without any need of ſubtle expoſitions. So that I ſee no reaſon why the antient Chriſtians ſhould repreſent

preſent this ſupper as ſuch a myſtic buſineſs, and make ſuch a ſecret of it to the catechumens, as if ſome mighty abſtruſe myſteries were wrapt up in it, as in ſome of the Pagan rites; and indeed it ſeems to have been ſo from an affectation to conform Chriſtianity to their former Pagan notions and cuſtoms, for which they might retain ſome fondneſs here, as in other things: And no doubt but they, who could find or fancy they found ſo much myſtery in ſuch a plain ſimple fact, as the Lord's ſupper, could eaſily find or make a great number of myſteries in matter of ſpeculation, tho' the plaineſt articles of faith. SERM. XI.

2. CHRIST aſſigns but one end expreſly. I know a great many ends of it are pretended, but they are either wholly groundleſs, or elſe very uncertain and far fetched.

SOME ſay, that the Lord's ſupper is a mutual covenant between Chriſt and Chriſtians, but this is ſo no otherwiſe than as other acts of worſhip and religion, which imply our profeſſed conſent to the goſpel and ſervice of Chriſt on our part; and on God's part this ordinance is not a direct confirmation of the covenant, only a ſign of the death of Chriſt, by which it was confirmed before.

OTHERS

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OTHERS ſay that the ſacrament exhibits and conveys grace and pardon, and therefore at the cloſe of an ill-ſpent life the ſinner hopes by it to have his pardon ſealed to him in particular; but tho' the blood repreſented was ſhed for the remiſſion of ſins, yet it is never ſaid, that the ſigns of it are given for that end, to do all that the death ſignified might do. It no more exhibits pardon, that I find, than reading the text here does, which declares in words, (as this ordinance does by ſigns,) that Chriſt died for the remiſſion of ſins, but that gives no man a pardon, only on repentance it aſſures him and others, that it may be obtained, whether at the time of receiving or at any other, but his pardon no more depends upon that than upon every other duty, which a penitent expecting pardon muſt attend to.

THE Papiſts ſuppoſe it to be a propitiatory ſacrifice of Chriſt's true body for the ſins of the living and the dead, when our Lord Jeſus had not yet been offer'd, nor did pretend to offer himſelf at the time of this inſtitution, and who the ſcriptures tell us did but once offer himſelf for ever. But there is no end of the devices of a myſtical imagination, when

when once men ſet themſelves to deviſe what pretty purpoſes and uſes they can fancy a thing may ſerve to; as if every good end, which a matter may be drawn unto, were the reaſon of its inſtitution. This ſerves only to confound mens minds, and to draw them off from the particular expreſs end of the duty, by leading them to ſuch thoughts, which, however good in themſelves, are yet common to other ordinary duties, and not the peculiar buſineſs of that, which is here eſpecially to be attended to. SERM. XI.

I. THE great and primary end of this inſtitution is for the commemoration of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, principally in his crucifixion and death. Here is no other end expreſly aſſigned by Chriſt or the Apoſtle but only this, and therefore it is a vain curioſity to imagine other ends and purpoſes. Men may make it to ſerve what purpoſes they pleaſe, but Chriſt's own interpretation and meaning of theſe ſymbolical rites is this, that it be in remembrance of him, and the Apoſtle's interpretation is the ſame, *viz.* that by it we ſhew forth or commemorate the Lord's death.

But

SERM. XI. But what is implied in this remembrance of Christ?

(1.) NEGATIVELY, not barely that we may have this occasion to call him to mind and to think of him, the author of our faith and religion, and what he has done and suffered for us: Tho' this must be one effect of it, yet it is not proper or peculiar to this institution. We ought frequently to be mindful of him as the great example of our daily walk, and our constant advocate with the father, and the sense of his love should have a perpetual influence on us to constrain us to live to him. Indeed this solemnity seriously attended to may be of good effect to ingrave the deeper impressions of him upon our minds, whom we may there contemplate with great advantage both for holiness and comfort, which may be highly promoted by looking unto Jesus the leader and finisher of our course: But surely this was not all that was intended, *viz.* that Christ might be in their memory and thoughts, who had seen him actually crucified before their eyes, and could never forget so memorable a fact. But

(2.) IT imports that an open declarative commemoration of Christ crucified be thereby made

made in the aſſemblies of Chriſtians. It is one thing inwardly to remember and another openly to commemorate, and ſolemnly to exhibit a public memorial, by which we not only remember a fact, but avowedly and triumphantly proclaim our remembrance, and our deſire to have that remembrance obſerved, upheld, and propagated. SERM. XI.

THUS the Lord's ſupper is for a declaration of Chriſt's death; the elements and actions of breaking the bread and pouring out the wine upon this occaſion do according to the nature of ſigns figuratively ſet forth, that Chriſt's body was torn and broken, wounded and ſlain, and his blood was ſhed; the declaration is made more expreſs in the words, which relate the meaning of theſe ſigns; much the ſame way as in the paſſover *Exod.* xii. 25—27. the memorial was exhibited, and the meaning of it given. Now this way of commemorating a matter openly, by a feaſt, and in an aſſembly, has frequently obtained on other occaſions for remembrance of the Donor or Founder of ſome common beneficial ſociety, or the author of ſome ſignal deliverance; and is very uſeful for conveying down the memory of any eminent perſon, or notable event,

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event, as a ſtanding monument to future generations; and therefore,

(3.) I SUPPOSE Chriſt's meaning here was, Do this for preſerving and tranſmitting a ſolemn memorial of me the crucified Saviour of the world from age to age. And thus the paſſover was a memorial throughout all ages; and this inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper has been one of the moſt uſeful traditional conveyances of Chriſtianity down to the later times; for before the ſcriptures of the new teſtament were written, and afterwards, before they became common, in the days when they had not our advantages of printing; before this, I ſay, it was a great means of publiſhing and conveying Chriſtianity, for Chriſtians to aſſemble and celebrate in this manner the public memorial of this important fact, the death of the crucified Jeſus, as dying for their ſalvation, and to confirm the New-Teſtament or Goſpel-Covenant.

HERE Chriſtianity was epitomized and ratified, and ſo long as this memorial was kept up, ſo long the Chriſtian religion could never be defaced; and this being handed down from one age to another became a ſtanding evidence of that matter of fact, on which Chriſtianity

Chriſtianity is founded, and is a ſure token, that there was ſuch a Meſſias or prophet, who came to inſtruct and ſave the world, ſince from the very time of his death this public monument has continued, and a church been founded upon it, who have always practiſed this recognition of it. So wiſely did our Lord appoint it for a laſting remembrance or memorial of his dying love, that it might never be forgot. SERM. XI.

FROM what has been ſaid under this head, I ſhall make theſe two or three obſervations.

1. HENCE we learn, that the Lord's ſupper in its very nature and deſign muſt be judged to be a ſtanding ordinance of perpetual uſe in the Chriſtian church. It is ſo far from being intended for the firſt ages only, that quite contrary it ſeems eſpecially deſigned for the uſe of the later; for at firſt there was leſs need of ſuch a memorial, becauſe leſs danger of his being at that time forgot by them, whoſe eyes had beheld the tragical fact, and ſeen him hang in agonies upon the ignominious croſs; but leſt in another generation, which had not ſeen it, or heard of it when done,

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he ſhould be forgotten, and the obligations to him be unknown or doubtful in ſucceeding ages, he inſtituted this memorial: So that it is eminently intended for us, on whom the ends of the world are come, who by this traditional conveyance of him, as crucified in effigie, are helped mightily in this article of our Chriſtian faith, *Chriſt crucified*, unto this day. The longer it is ſince the fact was tranſacted, the more need there is of this memorial, and indeed the apoſtle ſays, ver. 26. *It muſt be till his coming again*, not in his ſpirit, for that was now accompliſhed; nor to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, for what was that to the church of *Corinth*? Is there not as much need of his being remembred now as formerly? Or ſhould it ceaſe before it has done being uſeful? Had the body of Chriſtians laid by the uſe of this inſtitution, as ſome have done, they had been injurious both to the memory of our Saviour, and to after-ages by effacing this honourable memorial of his death.

2. I obſerve, that in this ordinance Jeſus Chriſt is ſuppoſed to be abſent, which with the conſideration of his being figured as dead effectually ſubverts the notions of Tranſubſtantiation

ſtantiation and Conſubſtantiation, which ſuppoſe him alive, and is nothing to the deſign of this ordinance; for how does that ſhew forth his death, which exhibits him alive? There is no manner of uſe for his real living body here, were it never ſo poſſible or eaſy to be true, tho' it is indeed impoſſible to conceive how it ſhould be, and as hard to ſwallow the doctrine with our reaſon, as it were inhuman to ſwallow his real body with our throats: Nor can I ſee any good purpoſe anſwered by it, for if, cannibal like, they had eat him up after they had crucified him, what good had it done them? SERM. XI.

3. FROM the nature and end of this inſtitution we may infer the extenſiveneſs of Chriſtian communion. It is for ſuch an end as all Chriſtians may promote and are capable of, and therefore belongs not to any party, but to all Chriſtians as ſuch, and ſhould be ſo adminiſtred, as may leave room for all, who will truly anſwer the end. What more can in reaſon be required? All reſtrictions and limitations upon ſuch are a defeating the end of the ordinance.

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II. A SECOND end may be aſſigned of this ordinance, which is rather the good uſe it may ſerve for, than the principal reaſon why it was inſtituted, *viz.* as a badge of Chriſtian communion or union: But this not being mentioned by the apoſtle in this place, where it was ſo proper for the cure of their animoſities, I conclude it was not the great end of the inſtitution, only what it may by conſequence be improved to, as the apoſtle ſeems to argue in the tenth chapter of this epiſtle, ver. 17. that being the ſervants of one common Lord, for whom in common he died, and who are fed at his table, we ſhould be one body, as *Iſrael* were one national church by all joining in the one public inſtitution of the paſſover, *one*, I ſay, tho' eaten at their ſeveral houſes. Juſt ſo, tho' Chriſtian ſocieties are ſeparated in place, yet they are one body, and have truly but one table, and not any proper or divided incloſures; ſo that their eating together is a ſymbol and means of friendſhip and endearment.

BUT alas! how has this end been perverted? Inſtead hereof, the Lord's ſupper is generally become the great engine of diviſion and ſchiſm throughout Chriſtendom, it is made

made the badge of every party, and an enclo- SERM. ſure about every little faction: Here one ſays, XI. I am of *Luther*, and there another, I am of *Calvin*, and a third, I am of *Rome*, and none muſt communicate without becoming of their ſect, and owning it as a diſcriminating teſt and livery of their ſeveral clans, and muſt be incloſed in their narrow folds alone, diſclaiming catholic communion with the reſt, as if *here* only, or *there* only Chriſt was, by which means Chriſtians are led to hate and cenſure each other, as not fit to be of the Chriſtian flock, or to eat together in love at the ſame feaſt; whereas in truth we ſhould give this cup of wine with the ſame charity, that Chriſt ſpeaks of giving a cup of cold water to a diſciple in the name of a diſciple, or on that account only, not reſpecting ſo much their conſent in other opinions as in this, that they believe in Chriſt Jeſus, and are his willing obedient ſervants. The apoſtle's argument *Rom.* xiv. 3. *for God hath received him* ſhould prevail here.

I THINK it a great uſurpation in men to make this communion the bond of any particular church, or of a private covenant, which ſhould be for our communion with Chriſt,

SERM. XI. both their Lord and ours, and all his body or members. To run into clans and ſects, to pin men up in their narrow folds, when the good ſhepherd has provided large and common paſture for all his ſheep, is injurious, firſt to our common Lord by narrowing and limiting what he has not incloſed; for I pray, whoſe table is it? Is it your own or your little party's table, or is it the Lord's table? If the Lord's, who ſhould dare to deny any of his ſervants their portion? What ſteward ſhould be ſo unjuſt as to thruſt away any gueſt invited by his maſter and acceptable to him? And then it is injurious to our fellow Chriſtians alſo, by denying them brotherly communion, as if they had no part in our common Lord and the fruits of his death.

THUS it is men have abuſed both baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, making one the entrance into, and the other the entertainment of their little family inſtead of God's; and have occaſioned ſuch debates and uncharitable animoſities about the appropriation of theſe ordinances to their own particular ſects, as if they baptized men with the waters of ſtrife, and ate the bread of violence; and while in a figure they break Chriſt's natural body, they

without

without any do truly break and tear his myſtical body into ſcraps and pieces, and as plainly deny the catholic church in their practice, as they put it into their creed. And is Chriſt indeed divided? Or are we not baptized into one body? Are we baptized into *Paul* or any particular Paſtor? Are our ſacraments oaths of fidelity to the leader of a little flock, or to the captain of our ſalvation? SERM. XI.

ALAS! how is the chriſtian church torn in pieces at this day to the ſcorn and deriſion of infidels, while a people, the badge of whoſe religion is mutual love, do little elſe but cenſure and wrangle, breathe out threatnings and ſlaughter, anathemas and mutual excommunications? Salvation and communion is annexed to a ſet of opinions or little modes, and on pretence of purity brotherly love is extinguiſh'd, which is one of the nobleſt inſtances of Chriſtian holineſs; and ſacrifice, nay, a ceremony is preferr'd to mercy. The communion of ſaints is ſcarce to be found; it is not as ſaints, but as ſaints of ſuch a mode, and not for the image of Chriſt, but for the ſtamp of a party, that men are received; and *a brother to be beloved* has as narrow a meaning among *Chriſtians*, as ever it had among

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the *Jews*, nay narrower, and the church more limited, than among the Donatists themselves. And how should it be otherwise, when this very symbol of love and union is made the great bone of contention, and is set up as a military standard to gather party against party, or as a wall of partition between brethren?

FOR our part, be it known we disclaim this fatal practice, let no man be excluded our communion, who loves our Lord Jesus in sincerity, who owns him as Lord and Mediator, and is willing to learn and know his will, and obey accordingly: And yet we tie him not to our society but to Christ, nor will we exclude ourselves from the communion of any other such, who impose not their particular opinions upon us, and so make our hypocrisy necessary to their communion.

WHY can't all, who love our blessed Saviour, and are willing to honour him as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, join together in an honorary memorial of him, in which they are all agreed? agreed, I say, in the end and design of the institution, and therefore should agree in the practice, if the apostle's advice might be observed, *Nevertheless*

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whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing. *Phil.* iii. 16. and the terms of communion made ſo wide, as to admit all ſober Chriſtians of whatever denomination; as wide as in thoſe primitive times, when all that was required was to believe Jeſus Chriſt to be the Son of God. *Acts* viii. 37. But alas! ſome ſeem to take great pride in monoplizing the divine favours, and are fond to be thought, at leaſt by themſelves, a choſen ſeparate people from all other Chriſtians.

I ſhould now proceed to make ſome application of the foregoing diſcourſe, by conſidering the injunction itſelf, *Do this*; but this I ſhall reſerve to another occaſion.

SERMON

SERMON XII.

The nature, end, and deſign of the Lord's ſupper.

1 Cor. xi. 25.

This do in remembrance of me.

IN a former diſcourſe on theſe words I obſerved to you, they contained three things, 1. The matter of the inſtitution, *This.* 2. The injunction, *Do this.* 3. The end of it, *In remembrance of me.* The firſt and third I have already diſpatch'd, and the ſecond I reſerved to be conſidered by way of application; *This do in remembrance of me.* We ought therefore to be careful, both that we do it, and that we do it worthily.

I. Let

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I. LET us do it. Let us account it a duty incumbent upon us to observe this solemn practice, as an established institution of Jesus Christ.

I HAVE shown from the nature and design of the institution, that it must be of standing and perpetual use amongst Christians, so that it was not a command peculiar to the disciples, or with respect to them only who were present, but a direction to them to propagate this practice among other Christians also, that it might spread with the gospel over all nations, and be transmitted down to succeeding generations to the world's end. Accordingly therefore we find the whole community of Christians in the Apostles days kept up this practice *Acts* chap. ii. ver. 42. chap. xx. ver. 7. and upon this account it was practised at *Corinth*, and the Apostle directs and injoins them to eat of this bread and drink of this cup; and it is evident from the most antient writers, that this was the common practice of the churches instructed by the Apostles, and a very solemn part of their worship, when assembled together, of which *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* give a particular account, and *Pliny* takes notice of the practice in his letter to *Trajan* about

about ſixty years after Chriſt's death: So that by the Apoſtles and ſuch as they inſtructed it was taken for a ſtanding ordinance among Chriſtians, *Do this.* And if it was inſtituted for us by Chriſt Jeſus, I preſume none of you will diſpute, that there lies great obligation upon us to practiſe it, for SERM. XII.

(1.) THE Apoſtle to give it a juſt authority calls him *Lord, I received from the* Lord *Jeſus.* He has a well-eſtabliſhed dominion over his churches, to whom the Father has given all power, a name above every name, and has committed all judgment to him, that to him we ſhould pay honour and obedience.

DOES he then ſay *Do this,* or *Do that,* and ſhall we not do it, and be as much at his command, as the centurion's ſervant was at his maſter's? Had he bid us do ſome great thing, (as indeed he has alſo bid us take up the croſs,) ſhould we not do it? Much more ought we to do this ſmall matter, when he bids us, *Take and eat in remembrance of me.* It has all the authority, which he, our Lord and Maſter, can give it. This will further appear if we conſider,

(2.) THE time of its inſtitution, which ſhews it to be of ſerious concernment to have this

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this practice obſerved. The Apoſtle takes notice, that the very ſame night, in which our Saviour was betrayed, he inſtituted this ſolemnity, and not only inſtituted it, but by his own pattern ſhewed them how to perform it, thereby giving them at once both his command and example, and this at a very ſerious juncture, in an hour of extreme concern and mighty thoughtfulneſs, the approaches of death and the grave. To be ſure no ſlender or mean matter could find place or regard in a mind ſo buſied, and poſſeſſed with ſuch weighty thoughts and cares, as his now was. Dying moments are precious with ſerious minds and are wiſely huſbanded, and none ever knew or was better diſpoſed for a due improvement of thoſe precious hours than he was; and yet even then, when he was bidding his diſciples farewel, and was going to the Father, he leaves this injunction upon them, *Do this, &c.* and ſpends time in exemplifying it, that he might give more weight to the ſolemnity.

WE may therefore conclude he deemed it a very neceſſary buſineſs, and laid ſome conſiderable ſtreſs upon the obſerving ſo ſolemn an inſtitution, and that he foreſaw its great uſefulneſs

uſefulneſs in the Chriſtian church, when at his going out of the world he leaves this charge with them; for after this ſupper, there is nothing related of him in the hiſtory, but the great agonies, in which he was ſorrowful even unto death, and in which he expired the next day. A thing ſo circumſtanced, a dying requeſt, a farewel charge, not only of our friend and benefactor, but our Lord and Maſter, muſt needs carry great force and weight along with it. But SERM. XII.

3. IT is a ceremony or rite injoined by him, who has aboliſhed all other ceremonies and rites as vain; We have therefore great reaſon to believe, that this ſerves for ſome ſpecial good uſe and purpoſe.

IT muſt always be remembered, that baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper are but rituals, or poſitive inſtitutions of Chriſt, and are not natural eſſential branches, or inſeparable from a good man, as the love of God and our neighbour, the worſhip of God, and the doing juſtice, mercy, and faithfulneſs: We ought therefore to lay more ſtreſs upon the ſubſtantial duties of holineſs and virtue, than upon theſe external rites, which can never ſave us without the other, tho' it is very poſſible a man

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man may be a good and holy man, and consequently may be saved without these. These rites however are certainly very useful, since appointed by him, who put down all other as beggarly and burdensome elements, and had not ordained this, if it had not been very proper and expedient, I say, *this one of the Lord's-supper*, for *Baptism* is but once to be administred, whereas this is of standing reiterated use all along, which is implied in the words, *As oft as ye do this*, thereby intimating, that it was to be done again and again. Now therefore, when this single rite is pitched upon for Christians practice, there is the more ground to suppose it contains in it something useful above the ordinary nature of common ceremonies.

LET us therefore charge ourselves with it as a duty, which either must be done, or we should be able to give a good account why it is not, or that it ceases to bind us, either from an impossibility of doing it at all, or of doing it without such corruption and guilt, as would make us transgressors of a more weighty matter of Christ's law.

II.

II. LET us do it *worthily*. I mention this becauſe the Apoſtle blames the *Corinthians* for doing it *unworthily*, and thereby incurring great danger, ver. 29. Here we muſt conſider what this eating and drinking unworthily was, and what the danger incurred by ſo doing. But firſt let me premiſe this caution, that none make themſelves uneaſy with groundleſs and vain imaginations, as if, becauſe they do not find ſome ſupernatural effects from the receiving this ſacrament, they have not anſwered the end of it, but have received the ſame unworthily. SERM. XII.

IF our Lord Jeſus had left men uncertain of the great end of this inſtitution, no wonder they ſhould ſet their imaginations to work to gueſs it might be for this or that purpoſe; but when he has expreſly told us it was to be in remembrance of his death, nay, and doubled it after the bread and after the cup, ſtill aſſigning this end alone, it is ſtrange men ſhould fancy there can be any higher end in it, and look on this as one of the meaneſt purpoſes, thereby diſtracting their minds with uncertain variety, ſo that not finding the grace and pardon, which they expected ſhould in a peculiar way be then conveyed to them, they are led

SERM. XII. into ſadneſs and very uncomfortable ſcruples, as if they had acted unworthily, when yet they may have ſeriouſly anſwered the great end of the ordinance.

THE unworthy eating here meant muſt therefore be gathered from the faults the Apoſtle here taxes the *Corinthians* with, for it is not to be ſuppoſed, that, when he is reproving them, he ſhould not mention thoſe faults, which were moſt reproveable. Now there are two faults eſpecially mentioned.

(1.) THAT there were diviſions among them, ver. 18. Altho' they met in one place, that uniformity did not hinder their ſchiſms, ſo long as uncharitable affections and practices were among them.

THEY had their own ſuppers to get, which they brought with them, before they ate the Lord's ſupper, as Chriſt inſtituted this ordinance after he had ſupped. Now in eating thereof they ate not in common but in parties, the rich had plenty, others but ſcanty fare, and they tarried not one for another, but each fell to eat their own portion; and thus they expreſſed but little of that common love and unity, which ought to be among Chriſtian brethren on ſuch occaſions, ver. 33.

Any

Any thing, which looked like a violation of brotherly love, the Apoſtle was jealous of, and he is an unworthy communicant, who acts injuriouſly to that, who either eats his own ſupper, or makes the Lord's-ſupper an occaſion of diviſion, and to be ſo his own as to exclude and thereby ſhame his brother. SERM. XII.

ALL ſuch terms of ſeparation and excluſion, which hinder true catholic communion, and limit it to a party or ſet of opinions, make that church not to eat the Lord's-ſupper, but every one their own: And he receives very unworthily, whoſe heart is alienated from or deſpiſes the communion of other ſerious Chriſtians, who think not juſt as he thinks; and God knows how many pretenders there be to great ſtrictneſs in their preparation and caution in admitting only worthy members, who yet are on this account very unworthy communicants, who in all their preparations have not caſt out the leaven of malice and pride, nor among their marks of grace have ſo much as the badge of Chriſtians in brotherly love to a diſciple as a diſciple, who inſtead of tarrying for their brethren, that come behind them, ſtop them from coming and ſhut them out. Theſe are the worſt rails about the altar, *viz.*

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the limiting terms, which bar any ſincere brother from communion at the table of their common Lord.

(2.) THEIR ſecond fault was, that they *differenced* not the Lord's body, for ſo it is to be render'd. They diſcriminated not this ſupper, which is the memorial of Chriſt's body, nor duly diſtinguiſhed it from their common meals: And that, which tended to this, might be their mixing the Lord's-ſupper with their own, which made it look like an ordinary meal; for I don't think from ver. 21. that they were drunken at this feaſt, as our tranſlation inſinuates, this is too groſs to ſuppoſe, only they behaved at it, as if it were merely to ſatisfy their hunger and thirſt, not minding the religious purpoſes as they ought, and therefore the Apoſtle ſeems to diſcountenance that cuſtom, and bids them to eat at home for that purpoſe, ver. 22, and 34. and by relating Chriſt's inſtitution ſhews them a quite different end of his ſupper, which was not to ſatiate their appetite, but to ſerve for a religious purpoſe in ſhewing forth the Lord's death, and therefore would require a ſerious ſuitable exerciſe of their minds at it; and in order to that, every communicant ſhould firſt

examine

examine himſelf, ver. 28. *q. d.* Let him reflect upon the end of the inſtitution, and examine himſelf by this relation I have now given from the Lord himſelf, whether he receives it ſo as to anſwer the true deſign thereof. Let him conſider what he is going about, and mind what he is doing, not running to it as an ordinary meal, but aſking himſelf why he is to do this, and *ſo* let him eat, or after the manner preſcribed, that it may appear to be a commemoration of Chriſt's death, with ſerioufneſs and ſolemnity. And this implies or requires theſe things: SERM. XII.

1. OUR true faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and a profeſſed belief of his goſpel. The death of Chriſt was the confirmation of his doctrine, by which he bore witneſs to the truth, and confirmed his law or covenant; ſo that when we honourably commemorate his death, it ſuppoſes our belief in him, that he was indeed the true Meſſias and God's only begotten ſon, that his laws are ſacred, his promiſes ſure, and all his doctrines true, that a pardon of ſin, life and immortality are to be obtained, and that there will be a future judgment and reſurrection, as he has declared. We ſhould not keep up the memorial of an impoſtor;

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if we thought him ſuch, we ſhould then let his name periſh: But we ſolemnize his memorial to declare, that we really honour, love, and believe in him, as our Lord and Saviour, who was injuriouſly treated and reproached as a malefactor, and for the ſake of truth and innocency with wicked hands was crucified and ſlain.

2. IT requires our heartieſt love and affection to him, whoſe body was broken and blood ſhed for us, namely for the remiſſion of our ſins. His patient obedience, his humble ſubmiſſion to the will of God was a pleaſing ſacrifice, to which God had great regard, and on this account exalted him, as St. *Peter* ſays *Acts* v. 31. *to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Iſrael and remiſſion of ſins.* It is this adds weight and value to his interceſſion as an advocate: He is our propitiation, by whom God is rendered propitious to a penitent ſinner, ſo that he gave himſelf for us, even for the ſins of the whole world. Can we then remember the tragical end of ſo great a benefactor without at the ſame time remembring his great love for us, and exciting ours to him? Should not his intereſt be dear to us? Should we not love to ſerve him,

and

and long to be where he is to behold his glory? Should we not ſay with the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* xvi. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be anathema maranatha.* He, who can be an enemy to him after having ſeen the evidence he has given of his divine miſſion and love to men, deſerves to ſuffer. Indeed there is ſomething in the ceremony and outward ſigns joined with the tragical interpretation ſo mournful and moving, that it is much adapted to ſtir our bowels and raiſe our affections, which naturally diſpoſes the mind to more eaſy exerciſes of rational love towards ſo endeared and once ſo afflicted a friend, and renders this inſtitution more affecting as to ſenſible paſſions than any others, which are not ſo valuable, if they do not feed and augment a ſettled habitual love and obedience to Chriſt and his laws. SERM. XII.

3. IT requires great thankfulneſs. This is part of the inſtitution to bleſs or give thanks. Our Lord gave thanks both over the bread and the cup at two diſtinct times. The apoſtle calls it the cup of bleſſing which we bleſs; hence it is called the *Euchariſt.* Our Lord *Jeſus* gave thanks and praiſe to his heavenly father, no doubt, not only for thoſe

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fruits of the earth, as the *Jews* uſed to do, but for his benefits to men by his goſpel and ſufferings for it. In like manner we muſt draw nigh with thankful benediction, ſenſible of the divine grace to us, admiring his marvellous compaſſion and bounty, rejoicing in the pardon and hopes of the goſpel: And tho' our Lord *Jeſus* bleſſed God only, yet it is very meet for us to celebrate alſo the praiſes of our Redeemer, the means of our ſalvation, in ſuch ingenuous and lofty ſtrains, as thoſe in the *Revelat.* v. 12. *Worthy is the Lamb, that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.*

4. IT implies a profeſſed obedience to him, as our Lord and Maſter. The doing this is an acknowledgment of his authority, and by the ſame reaſon we are bound to do all the reſt of his commandments. As it implies our faith in him, ſo it ties us to obedience to him. Let us then remember him as our Lord, whom we reſolve to ſerve in all manner of ſelf-denial, even unto death; to whom we owe a life in return for his, and are not worthy to be his friends, unleſs we do whatever he commands us.

MOST

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MOST other duties may be reduced hither, but theſe are more directly implied in it. And from hence we may learn, that it is not every flatneſs or diſtraction in our devotion, or the want of ſo many hours previous preparation is the unworthineſs cenſured by the Apoſtle, but plain wickedneſs, or groſs negligence: From theſe let us keep ourſelves free, and then ſhall we communicate of his benefits, and his fleſh be meat and nouriſhment to our ſouls to eternal life. To remember and believe in him will add mighty vigour to all the principles of holineſs, and feaſt us with joy and gladneſs, when we are aſſured by him, that through his name pardon and eternal ſalvation are to be obtained.

BUT then conſider the danger of doing this unworthily, for

1. SUCH are guilty of the body and blood of Chriſt ver. 27. not of breaking his body or ſhedding his blood, but guilty of a contempt and miſuſe thereof, *i. e.* of what is the ſign and memorial of it; and it is a great indignity offer'd to the Lord Jeſus to eat and drink in this ſolemnity without a ſuitable diſtinguiſhing decorum, and but juſt in the ſame manner as if at an ordinary meal. It

SERM. XII. will argue, that we make little account of him, if we are not ſerious and attentive, when he is thus ſet forth as crucified before us.

2. SUCH unworthy receivers eat and drink *judgment* to themſelves ver. 29, 30. We render it *damnation*, but tho', as far as it may be a ſinful contempt of Chriſt Jeſus, it may, unleſs repented of, incur the ſame damnation as other wilful ſins or groſs negligence, yet it is plain the Apoſtle meant not that here, becauſe he ſhews what judgments he intends ver. 30. namely, ſuch puniſhments as ſickneſs, diſeaſes, and temporal death, and this was exemplified among themſelves, but it was to prevent eternal condemnation.

UNBELIEF and diſobedience, injuſtice, malice, covetouſneſs, ſenſuality and the like will certainly exclude ſinners from future happineſs, and expoſe them to everlaſting miſery; but to the unbecoming miſcarriage about this inſtitution, (if contempt and wilful impiety be not the principle,) the Apoſtle only threatens temporal judgment, juſt as was formerly threaten'd to the neglect of the poſitive ceremonial inſtitutions of the law of *Moſes*; ſuch were to be cut off from *Iſrael*.

AS between ritual and moral precepts God makes a great difference, ſo does he between the

the diſobedience to the one and to the other; for to want moral purity and righteouſneſs in holy principles renders a man both an offender, and uncapable of happineſs; to fail in the other may make him guilty, but not vicious, if there be not a wicked cauſe of that omiſſion. There is terror enough indeed to make us ſerious and careful in this matter, but not ſo great as belongs to immoral crimes, not ſo ſevere as that denounced againſt vicious practices, that they, who do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God 1 *Cor.* vi. 9. *Gal.* v. 21. SERM. XII.

MEN ſhould therefore be in greater terror for fear they act unjuſtly, or not love their neighbour, for fear they be worldly or uncharitable, ſlanderous or envious, than for fear of unworthily receiving the Lord's ſupper: But yet this alſo is to be feared and ſhun'd, and therefore examine your ſelves, be ſerious and ſolemn, as thoſe who come with minds full of reſpect and true love to him, who loved us and died for us, who hath waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts to God, even his father: To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON

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Faith and patience the way to inherit the promiſes.

HEB. vi. 12.

That ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.

SINCE there are none, who profeſs our holy Chriſtian religion in this militant ſtate of trial, but are ready highly to applaud the ſucceſs and felicity of thoſe, who have finiſhed their courſe, and won the prize; Since we unanimouſly proclaim them happy, who have received the end of their faith, *viz.* the ſalvation of their ſouls, there cannot be a greater encouragment offer'd to our thoughts unto

SERM. XIII. unto holy diligence in religion, than what the happy iſſue of their pious converſation preſents us with, nor can we make a better uſe of your honourable reſpect for your glorified friends, who are gone before, and your high admiring eſteem of their great happineſs, than by perſuading you to follow after them by treading in the ſame paths, in which they have found the way to eternal glory.

THE author of this epiſtle, after he had ſuggeſted terrible things of thoſe, who ſhould apoſtatize from their profeſſion, encourages theſe perſons to better hopes by profeſſing his better opinion of them, as in a ſtate of ſalvation; yet not ſo as to encourage the abatement of their religious induſtry in the leaſt, but rather to whet and animate their active zeal in further progreſs, he urges them to perſevere diligently, that they attain a *plerophory* of hope, either a full aſſurance, or, as ſome interpret it, a fulfilling of their hope, *i. e.* by actual enjoyment, as others now do ſays the text, which contains an exhortation to the imitation of them, who are gone before; where we have,

1. THE perſons to be followed or imitated, *viz. The inheritors of the heavenly promiſes:*

miſes: This deſcription includes a vaſt multitude, a great cloud of examples or witneſſes, tho' it may more particularly refer to the patriarchs. SERM. XIII.

2. THE matter of that imitation. Not in all they did, ſince in many things they offended, but in their holy carriage, or what they did as purſuers of heaven, particularly *in their faith and patience*, by which eſpecially they made their way to final happineſs.

3. THE encouragement to this imitation from the good iſſue of their example: They took this courſe and they did well, they are now got to heaven, where all of us profeſs a deſire to go. Who would but follow?

IN the proſecution therefore of theſe words I ſhall ſpeak to theſe three general propoſitions.

I. THAT they, who after a courſe of piety in this world are gone hence, are now inheriting the promiſes.

II. THAT the way, by which they arrived at this inheritance, was by holy diligence, faith, and patience.

III. THAT this ſhould greatly encourage us to follow them in the ſame ſteps.

I. THAT

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I. THAT they, who after a courſe of piety in this world are gone hence, are now inheriting the promiſes. Here it will be proper to conſider what is meant by the *promiſes*, and what by *inheriting* them.

BY the *promiſes* no doubt is meant the promiſe of eternal life, for it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe he ſpeaks of any other promiſes than what themſelves were concerned in, and tho' he inſtances in the promiſe of God to *Abram*, that he would bleſs him, and ſhews his faith and patience in waiting for the accompliſhment, yet the main part of that promiſe was ſpiritual and eternal happineſs; indeed there was little elſe that he could be ſaid to inherit, for he never ſaw his poſterity numerous as the ſtars of heaven, nor his ſeed poſſeſſing the gates of their enemies, nor did he inherit the land of *Canaan*; no, the heavenly *Canaan* was the main thing he eyed, this was the promiſe he had in view, *Heb.* xi. 16. and he plainly tells us, that he meant thoſe promiſes, which Chriſtians were ſharers in the hopes of, ver. 18. and which is the foundation of our heavenly hope.

BY *inheriting* the promiſes is meant the actual poſſeſſion of the good they contain.

Chriſtians

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Chriſtians are now heirs of the promiſes in expectation, while they live in faith and patience; but after that exerciſed they poſſeſs them, as thoſe to whom the inheritance is now come, they have obtained the promiſes. They were once heirs of hope here, they viewed the promiſes at a diſtance, they were ſtrangers on earth making towards their eternal home, the veil was between them; but where are they now? we ſee them not among the expectant heirs below, why, *They are gone to inherit the promiſes*, thoſe exceeding precious promiſes, that were given to them. What to us are but promiſes, are to them performances, and ſo are no more properly promiſes, only that is the right, by which they hold them.

THEY have run their race, and fought their fight, and have now won the prize; they have done their taſk, their day of labour is finiſhed, and the evening is come, in which they have receiv'd their reward in part; not their full reward indeed, nor the utmoſt accompliſhment of the promiſes, there remains ſomething ſtill behind. Till the great day all is not fulfill'd to them, which God has ſpoken of; even the promiſe to *Abram* is not quite accompliſhed, till he be raiſed

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from the dead, as Christ intimates *Luke* xx. 37. It does not yet appear what they shall be, till that day 1 *John* iii. 2.

THE total accomplishment of gospel-promises and privileges shall be to all the saints of God together, some get to heaven before others, but they shall not without us be made perfect; the full inheritance shall be given to all at once at the great day, but in the mean time a great and glorious part of the promises is possessed by the saints in light, they are enter'd into the promised paradise, and enjoy the promised presence and company of the holy *Jesus* in a total deliverance from all painful positive evils; they are arrived at the blessed heavenly country, tho' they have not yet seen all the glories of that land, nor are raised to the highest dignity there; they are secured of all, and feel and see abundance, that fills them with joy and glory; instead of faith they have sight, and joyful triumph instead of patient enduring. This is the end of their faith and holiness, the salvation of their souls, thus it has fared with them, they have got over all hindrances and difficulties, and after all their disputes and doubts they are got into quiet undisturbed possession of heaven, so that if it be

be asked, where are your holy anceſtors and progenitors, ſince they live not here ſtill? it may be anſwered, they now inherit the promiſes. While we wait and hope, they have and enjoy, this indeed we do not ſee by ſenſible eyes, but this we are taught to believe; thus it is reported in the word of truth, and thus it muſt neceſſarily be according to the tenor of the goſpel, which ſays, that they, who are faithful unto death, ſhall have a crown of life. They have not indeed eſcaped death, but that is become the way to their inheritance, we ſee them no more here, but they may be found in glory. I proceed to ſhow,

II. THAT the way, by which they arrived at this inheritance, was by holy *diligence*, *faith*, and *patience*, not merely by having lived under the profeſſion of religion or the promiſes of heaven, for many do ſo, who never inherit them after death, and ſeeing we muſt only expect to reach it in the ſame way, it is uſeful for our direction to conſider how they ſteered their courſe for heaven. There are three things, which made up their character while here in this life.

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1. IT is implied, that they were *not ſlothful*, not ſluggiſh, dull, and ſlow, as the word imports, chap. v. ver. 11. It is properly uſed of ſuch as move with a ſlow dull pace, arguing a ſluggiſh heavineſs and indiſpoſition for action. Such we muſt not be, if we would follow the ſaints above, becauſe it is put in direct oppoſition thereto, *Be not ſlothful, but followers*; which is as much as to ſay, that if we be ſlothful, we are not imitators of them, for they were not ſluggiſh in the work of God and their own ſalvation; they did not conſult their fleſhly eaſe, and indulge their carnal quiet, when they were ſeeking after heaven; they did not ſit down with folded hands in careleſs idleneſs and negligence inſtead of working out their ſalvation; they did not ſlumber and ſleep inſtead of furniſhing their lamps; they did not count it enough to ceaſe from doing evil and ſo doing nothing, as the Phariſee *Luke* xviii. 11. their religion was not meer lip-labour, or a lifeleſs cold form or dead image: Had this been their temper, they had never inherited the promiſes, their ſouls had famiſhed, as the ſlothful man is ready to do in his body; No, they were diligent to the end, they made it their buſineſs

to

to ſerve their God and do his will, they were excited by an holy reverence and dread of him, by a fervent zeal and a ſerious ſenſe of the important conſequences before them; they could not reſt inquiring what they muſt do to be ſaved, and which was the way to *Zion*, towards which they had ſet their faces; they fled as men in haſte from the wrath to come, they ſought *firſt* the kingdom of God; it was by *ſtriving*, that they enter'd in at the ſtrait gate, it was by holy *violence* offer'd, that they took heaven; they had a race ſet before them, and they run *vigorouſly*, pulling up the hands, which hung down, and ſtrengthening the feeble knees; they were engaged in a warfare, and they did wreſtle and watch, endured hardſhip and ſtrove for the maſtery, or they had never gained the prize. SERM. XIII.

INDEED they did many of them ſometimes grow ſluggiſh and cold, ſlumber and loiter, but it was not this, which helpt them to reach heaven, this retarded and hinder'd them, this hazarded their ſalvation and filled them with doubts and fears, but this did not habitually prevail, for then they had been loſt, as the ſlothful unprofitable ſervant was; No, religion is ſo ſerious a buſineſs, and of ſo

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large a compaſs, contains ſuch multiplied univerſal practice, that runs through all relations and conditions, and is attended with ſo many hindrances and diſcouragements, that he can never do any thing in it to purpoſe, who does not beſtir himſelf and work with vigour, while it is day. They were therefore ſuch as gave all *diligence* to make their election firm and ſure, or they had never had an abundant entrance into Chriſt's kingdom; the ſervice of God had their care, their head and heart and hands, while they were minding the one thing needful, and preſſing hard for the prize now obtained; and the more they were thus diligent, the more comfortable aſſurance they had of the inheritance.

THEY lived in the exerciſe of *Faith* in particular, (diligence was a general thing running through all the parts of their religion,) by the means and uſeful influence of this they have reached heaven before us. The heirs of heaven live much by faith, their whole courſe is greatly directed and influenced by it, I ſuppoſe the text ſpeaks of faith in God's promiſes as the reward of his ſervants, the ſame, which influenced all thoſe renowned ſaints in the eleventh chapter. Now this

this is the true character of them, that go on ſucceſsfully towards heaven, it is through *faith.* SERM. XIII.

(1.) THEY did *by faith* diſcern and apprehend the great things promiſed, they believed before they ſaw or inherited heaven, ſo *chap.* xi. *ver.* 13. they were ſuch as diſcovered the things within the veil, *viz.* life and immortality. No man can ſerve God acceptably without this faith, *ver.* 6. he that ſees not further than ſenſe and time is never like to be happy beyond them, nor are we like to know more but by faith; it is *this* is the Chriſtian's principle, by which he views that diſtant world; by *this* God's bleſſed ſaints were firmly perſuaded of inviſible realities; they ſet him, who is inviſible, before their eyes, they had reſpect unto the recompence of reward, they did not talk of heaven and eternity, as a fable or uncertain tradition, but they ſtedfaſtly believed it under great conviction of the truth of it, and carried the ſenſe of it about with them; they believed the unſeen world in its importance as well as reality, and not only might they be ſaid to believe it, as that denotes an habitual perſuaſion of it, but as it denotes the exerciſe of that principle.

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(2.) THEY therefore exerciſed *that faith* in frequent expreſs regards to this inheritance. It is one thing to believe the heavenly promiſed glory, and another to walk by faith and to live in the act of it. Many, if aſk'd, can profeſs they believe an unſeen world, who never have any believing thoughts or contemplations of it, faith does not do its office in preſenting it to their minds; But thoſe in the text were ſuch as kept their eye upon the promiſes, they looked at the things not ſeen, they made them preſent to their minds, they embraced and converſed with them, they had reſpect to them, as *Moſes*, and acted as within ſight of heaven, and therefore many a time they turned their eyes thitherward.

(3.) THEY were *by faith* determined towards the inviſible glory as their great choice and end, their faith made them with *Moſes* chuſe theſe promiſes before all the treaſures of *Egypt*. True faith repreſents theſe matters in ſuch a light, as draws the ſoul to a practical preference of them to all things. They were ſuch as aim'd at *this*, deſired and laboured for *this*: *This* made them victors over the world 1 *John* v. 4. *this* made them count all here as

as loſs and dung, *this* made them profeſs to be ſtrangers on earth, becauſe faith made them earneſt for heaven, in ſubordination to *this* they managed all their other affairs; ſenſe and fleſh did not diſpoſe of their time or ſtrength, or eſtate, but regard to heaven ruled them above all. They lived as perſons bound in ſpirit and bent towards the *New Jeruſalem* whatever it coſt; without this faith they had neither apprehended nor ſeriouſly minded heaven, much leſs had they vigorouſly ſought it, but by faith they were directed heavenward; by *that* they were animated and quicken'd in their holy purſuit of it, by *that* they found this attractive, that drew their hearts upward: *This* gave them courage againſt all difficulties, *this* was their guide to conduct them, and their leader to vanquiſh all enemies in the way to that good land of promiſe, ſo that much is owing to their faith in this matter; the heavenly glory was both the object and the end of it. SERM XIII.

(4.) THIS *faith* was both their ſupport and comfort under all their ſorrows; they had many trials, but here was their cordial. *Pſalm* xxvii. 1 *Pet.* i. 8.

3. THERE

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3. THERE was another grace exerciſed this way, namely *Patience*, and that in ſeveral inſtances and reſpects:

(1.) THEY exerciſed *patience* in enduring the troubles they met with in their way to heaven. Many a ſore trial they underwent, many a burden they bore, many a grief they felt, before they got to that quiet place where they now are; they travel'd through the ſame wilderneſs and paths that we go in, and ſome of them through more grievous thorny paths; they had not only their ſhare in the common griefs of this uncertain frail and mortal ſtate, had ſickneſs and pain, loſſes and diſappointments to bear, but many ſharp aſſaults of perſecuting rage; ſome were tried with reproaches and mockings, ſome with the ſpoiling of their goods, ſome with impriſonment, and ſome with a violent death, ſome with one ſort, ſome with another ſort of fatal cruelty, as we find near the end of this epiſtle. Now all this put their patience to the trial how to bear them calmly and comfortably without murmuring againſt God, or uſing ſinful ſhifts for eaſe, or loſing all heart and ſpirit for ſervice to God. With this patience they bore and endured all; when perplexed, they were not in deſpair,

deſpair, they fainted not in the day of adver- SERM. XIII.
ſity, but ſtood their ground, and weather'd the ſtorm. In like manner they exerciſed patience, as we muſt, in the inward conflict of crucifying all carnal affections, mortifying their deareſt ſins, denying themſelves in cutting off a right hand or plucking out a right eye, and enduring much of this contradiction: They went through the valley of *Baca* unto the mount *Zion* above, when by patience only they could poſſeſs their own ſouls, while through much tribulation they entered into the kingdom of God.

(2.) THEIR *patience* was exerciſed in long continued ſervice and labour. Conſtant diligence is an uneaſineſs to the fleſh, and a frail mind not fortified with patience will eaſily tire *Rom.* ii. 7. Men impatient of labour and confinement cannot hold on, they are weary of well doing; even our active ſervice is a warfare and ſtrife, which few have the fortitude enough to maintain to the laſt; but they, who are gone to inherit the promiſes, gave diligence to the end, they fought out their fight, they quite finiſhed their race, they were faithful to the death, or they had loſt all. They, who are at reſt above, held on

SERM. XIII. on to the laſt, they had patience to worſhip God daily, and to walk conſcientiouſly, to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this world for many years, the length of their courſe did not tire them; Tho' ſome of them enter'd early and bore the heat of the day in God's vineyard, yet they patiently continued in well-doing.

(3.) THEIR *patience* was tried by their long expectation of a delayed reward. Patience is as really exerciſed in the want of deſired good, as under poſitive evils *Rom.* viii. 25. *Heb.* x. 36. Hope defer'd makes the heart ſick, earneſt deſires are apt to raiſe impatience in the unſatisfied mind, eſpecially when during the delay of the expected joy many ſore evils preſs upon us to wiſh the haſtening of that bleſſed day, which will both ſatisfy our deſires, and heal our wounds.

THUS did theſe inheritors wait for the ſalvation of God, they thought it long to be forty years kept in the wilderneſs, yet patiently expecting, as *Joſhua* and *Caleb*, they gave not up their hope or deſires, they yielded not to unbelief, but as the huſbandman, when he has ſown the ſeed, and it lies buried under the clods, waits for the precious

fruits

fruits of the earth in due ſeaſon, ſo did they for heaven: They did not impatiently ſay, *I'll wait for my happineſs no longer*, nor raſhly turn to the choice of preſent pleaſures and vanities, honours, or riches, as *Demas* loved this preſent world, which is the fruit of ſinful impatience in haſty carnal wretches, who are all for preſent good: No, they were as ſervants *waiting* for their Lord's coming; ſometimes indeed with St. *Paul* they wiſhed mightily to depart, but upon conſideration were content to wait and abide in the fleſh *Phil.* i. 24. till at laſt they have obtained the inheritance. SERM. XIII.

IF we would know what they were on earth, this was the courſe of their pilgrimage; when they were in our caſe upon trial, theſe were the principal qualities, that ſhone moſt eminently in their lives, and governed the ſtream of their actions and converſations. *Faith* in directing, *Patience* in enduring, and *Diligence* in executing, theſe three make up an holy ſaint in this life. But for our encouragement to imitate them, we may conſider, that this is only the hardſhip of the *way*, and is not their caſe *now*. They have done with faith, and patience, and difficult labour, and now

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reap the ſweet and eaſy fruit of them. Now, bleſſed ſouls, they are preſent in the heavenly paradiſe, their faith is turned into ſight and enjoyment; it was their excellency in a world of unbelief, that they believed, now it is their excellency in the land of viſion, that they believe not as then; they have now no burden to try their patience, which has had its perfect work: This was their caſe, when heirs in their minority, but now they are inheritors; now joy and gladneſs, love and praiſe take their turn to rule and prevail, God has adjudged the prize to be theirs, he has given them the poſſeſſion, the day of glory has dawned upon them, and will ſhine more and more unto the perfect day.

I SHOULD now have proceeded to have conſider'd in the third place, That this their happy ſucceſs ſhould greatly encourage us to follow them in the ſame ſteps, who have thus gone before: But this muſt be left to another opportunity.

SERMON

SERMON XIV.

Faith and patience the way to inherit the promiſes.

HEB. vi. 12.

That ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.

IN a former diſcourſe on theſe words I propoſed to ſpeak to three general propoſitions.

I. THAT thoſe, who after a courſe of piety are gone hence, are now inheriting the promiſes.

II. THAT the way, by which they arrived at this inheritance, was by holy diligence, faith and patience.

THESE

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THESE two I have already diſpatched, and proceed now to ſhew in the third place,

III. THAT this their happineſs ſhould greatly encourage us to follow them in the ſame ſteps, who have thus gone before.

AND here I ſhall conſider,

1. WHAT this following them implies.
2. WHY we ſhould thus follow them.

1. WHAT does the following them imply? The word denotes a following by imitation, rather than in order of time or going after them, tho' this alſo is implied, becauſe he, who imitates another, muſt neceſſarily do it afterwards; it is ſuch a following, as when one follows a copy or example. Now this imitation is both,

(1.) IN reſpect of the iſſue or happy end of them, whom they are directed to follow. We ſhould deſire and aim to be like them in their final bleſſedneſs, we ſhould propoſe the ſame end to ourſelves that they did, we ſhould aſpire after the ſame promiſed inheritance as they. Did they ſeek for glory and immortality as their reſolved choice and peremptory end? ſo ſhould we. Did they look at the things not ſeen, and make them their mark? Would nothing

nothing leſs ſatisfy them than heaven and eternal glory? We ought to be inſpired with the ſame noble ambition. Could nothing tempt them to ſet their hearts on earthly happineſs, to take up on this ſide *Jordan*, or to be ſatisfied with having their good things in this life? Would they take nothing (no not ſuch offers as *Satan* made to Chriſt, *Mat.* iv.) in lieu of heaven, not all the treaſures of *Egypt*, any more than *Moſes?* Did they refuſe their own native country and earthly inheritance as not worth minding, and embrace the promiſes as their joy and treaſure, *Heb.* xi. 13, 15? Let us be as far from making riches, or honour, or preſent carnal pleaſures our chief aim, as they were. Let us chuſe the ſame better part, and count all but loſs and dung in compariſon with having God for our God, that he may prepare for us an heavenly continuing city. We ſhall not imitate them unleſs we bend towards the ſame place and home, the ſame eternal inheritance and reſt, that they aimed at and have gained to, unleſs we ſhow the ſame concern to be as happy, and proſecute it with the ſame zeal and earneſtneſs, the ſame value and eſteem for it.

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(2.) IN reſpect to the way to this happineſs; in this we are chiefly to imitate them. No doubt but we would all deſire to be like them in their happy end, to eſcape hell and the wrath to come, and to inherit a great reward as they, we could wiſh it were as well with us, and all dangers were over as to our eternal ſtate. *Balaam* could heartily wiſh to die the death of the righteous, *Eſau* would fain have had the bleſſing, and we all covet to have the inheritance; but many love not the way, by which thoſe that have gone before have attained it; they would be like them in the end, but not in the method they took. It is here therefore, that the text principally calls for our imitation of them, namely in their diligence, faith, and patience. Let the ſame mind, the ſame principles and gracious affections be in you as were in them, we muſt labour and ſeek for the ſame impreſſions of the ſpirit of God upon us, as were made upon them, to furniſh us with the ſame active zeal, and the ſame reſolute fortitude for enduring trials. We muſt practiſe the ſame leſſons for ſelf-denial and mortification, and be at the ſame expence for that pearl of ineſtimable price. The particulars, in which

which we ſhould follow them, ſhall be reſerved for the application. SERM. XIV.

2. WHY ſhould we thus follow them? Becauſe

(1.) WE have the ſame reaſon as they had for theſe holy exerciſes. Had they the encouraging promiſes of the inheritance before them to excite them? And have not we the ſame? nay, much more large and clear promiſes and revelations of it than thoſe, whom the text ſeems to refer moſtly to, namely the Patriarchs. Was that inheritance ſo well deſerving of all their holy purſuits by labour and patience? And is it not ſo now? Could their faith apprehend it, and derive influence from the promiſes, and may not ours alſo ſtand us in the ſame ſtead? Have we more to divert or tempt us from heaven than they? Was not this earth as full of allurements, and as liberal in its baits to them as to us? Was not their ſelf-denial as much as we are called to? Was faith, and patience, and holy diligence needful for them? and is it not as needful for us? And why ſhould not the ſame reaſons prevail as ſtrongly on us as it did on them, who are gone before us?

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(2.) WE have ſomewhat more reaſon for it from their very example. This very conſideration of their ſucceſsful example carries in it many arguments. The example, eſpecially of friends, has a ſtrange power to draw and captivate beyond the force of an argument; it is therefore eaſier to follow than give an example in any great enterprize: And it is evident the author of this epiſtle here lays a great emphaſis on this, that it is a following others; it ſweetens heaven at the end, and holineſs in the way, to think that we are not ſingular in either: But what force there is in this will be conſidered in the motives, that are proper for preſſing this duty.

OF what has been ſaid we may make the following application:

1. WE may hence gather matter of conſolation concerning our deceaſed friends, who have finiſhed ſuch a courſe. They are gone to inherit, here they lived upon the promiſes, but now upon the performances: Think not, that they are loſt or miſcarried, becauſe laid in the grave; indeed all their worldly contrivances, and hopes, and enjoyments are loſt, which carnal men count a miſerable

miſerable undoing, but theſe were not their great concern or delight. Their main project was to enjoy God and heaven, and this deſign is accompliſhed by their departure hence: They are removed from their poſt here to high dignity and honour, to poſſeſs what they lived in the faith of, and what they laboured and waited for; and if when heirs of the promiſes they had ſuch ſtrong conſolation by hope, how much better is it with them now that they are inheritors in enjoyment? SERM. XIV.

2. THIS affords great conſolation to ſuch of us, who are in the ſame way, for if this was the iſſue of their courſe, who were ſuch as we, it ſhews what will be the end of our courſe alſo. Have their faith and patience led them to heaven? Whither elſe ſhould ours lead us, but to the ſame place? It ſhould be matter of great joy to us to think what has been the end of their faith, namely their eternal ſalvation; for then, ſince ours is the ſame faith, and the ſame exerciſe of patience, it will certainly have the ſame end. In their happineſs we may ſee our own.

3. WE may hence learn, who it is are out of the way to heaven; for if this be the way,

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that they got to that bleſſed place, then thoſe, who are of a contrary temper and behaviour, are not like to arrive there, becauſe they want that influence, which ſhould carry them on.

SUCH are all they, who are under prevailing *ſloth* and cold indifference about holineſs and heaven; and yet alas, how many ſuch are there, who number themſelves among the profeſſors of religion! who are dull in practiſing, who love a cheap lazy religion, and would have heaven upon eaſy terms, who are for faith without works; they conſult the eaſe and quiet of their fleſh in their whole courſe, they are active and vigorous, ſedulous and warm about the world or their pleaſures, they purſue low deſigns at any rate, till they are tired and ſpent; but religion is a ſort of careleſs imploy, that coſts them no thoughts, puts them to no pains; they know not what it is to work in it with fear and trembling, with huge concern and reſtleſs fervor; their ſleepy drowzy profeſſion in a few formal cuſtomary exerciſes is far from a ſtrife or warfare; they will not ſtir up themſelves to lay hold on God, nor watch and ſtrive in duty or againſt temptation. To do

do no hurt is the moſt of their taſk, to bury their talent is the higheſt inſtance of their faithfulneſs, not minding to fill up their relative capacities with ſuitable ſervices, or their holy duties themſelves with any ſpiritual and inward life; they are not in earneſt for heaven, nor ſhew any dreadful ſenſe of eternal ruin.

LET ſuch trifling careleſs profeſſors know, that none of them, who inherit, were admitted on ſuch terms as theſe, none of theſe unprofitable ſervants are enter'd into the joy of their Lord, no, they are caſt into outer darkneſs; theſe ſleepy unvigilant virgins find the door of life ſhut againſt them. Sirs, this is not the way to proſper, to be utterly ſluggiſh in religion, often to intermit our work, always to do it ſlightly, and to be for putting it off from time to time; your *ſeeking* without *ſtriving* to enter the ſtrait gate will never carry it *Luke* xiii. 24. and really this is the moſt fatal way of profeſſors miſcarrying, as being leaſt diſcerned, and deſerves therefore to be ſeriouſly thought on by us all, that it may alarm us out of our wretched lukewarmneſs.

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ANOTHER ſort of ſuch, as are out of the way to heaven, are they who are ſtrangers to the life of *faith* and the frequent exerciſes of it, who are wholly under the impreſſions of ſenſe and time, theſe are the only things which fill their thoughts, which they are bent upon and ſolace themſelves with; they have none of the faith, which preſents and realizes to them things unſeen, they look not at the things unſeen, they converſe not with them in believing thoughts, they retreat not to them for their conſolation. Alas, theſe are quite out of the way to heaven, things of ſenſe and time don't give thoſe impreſſions, which fit a ſoul for the joys and work of heaven: No, it is through unbelief men periſh, for want of this faith they are overcome of the world, becauſe they dont apprehend the importance of another.

YOU, who can live without a frequent reſpect unto the recompence of reward, who can pretend to conflict in this ſpiritual warfare without the ſhield of faith or the uſe of it, don't think you can reach the inheritance, who are ſo little regardful of it.

ANOTHER ſort of perſons, who are out of the way to heaven, are ſuch as are not fortified

tified with *patience*, who are too impatient of diſturbance to bear any hardſhips for the ſake of Chriſt or heaven, who are determined to ſpare themſelves in caſe of ſharp perſecution, and cannot endure the thoughts of the croſs of Chriſt, whom a little reproach or ſcorn makes to ſwerve from the ſtrait path, and draws them into ſinful ſhifts, who cannot bear the cutting off a right-hand ſin, who have not patience to hold on in well-doing; their righteouſneſs is as the morning cloud, it paſſeth away, they end in the fleſh after good beginnings, their zeal is ſoon ſpent, they halt and waver inſtead of going forward in an even ſteady tenor. Such who muſt have preſent good and have not patience to ſtay for a diſtant reward, who have not patience to live by faith and hope, or to want the preſent gratifications of their deſires, they can't endure a ſtate of trial: Theſe weak and feeble ſpirits, that can bear nothing, nor digeſt any inconveniencies, will never do any good. Religion is attended with ſo much ſelf-denial, that it is not a profeſſion fit for any but ſuch, as are armed with reſolute courage and patience. SERM. XIV.

4. WE

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4. WE ſhould from hence be exhorted to follow theſe perſons in all parts of their character.

FIRST in their *Diligence*. Verily, Sirs, either the religious ſervice of God, and the purſuit of eternal life is none of our buſineſs at all, or it is a moſt ſerious one, that ſhould be heartily minded: Oh then that you would rouſe up your ſelves to work out your ſalvation! Awake thou that ſleepeſt, ſhake off that drowzineſs, which ſo ill becomes an expectant of, and a contender for the eternal prize, give all diligence to make thy calling and election ſure, ſtrive hard, offer violence to take heaven by force and importunity, beware of giving way to intermiſſions of ſecret duties, of letting them degenerate into cold heartleſs formalities, or of delaying neceſſary work, which things are an indication of *ſloth*. Don't burden yourſelves with a load of worldly cares and diſtractions, which exhauſt the ſpirits, and make you move heavily as under a weighty clog.

LET us quicken ourſelves by conſidering the tremendous important conſequences of the work we are engaged in, the ſhort ſpace of time in which alone we can work, and how many

many there are, who finally periſh by negligence in the undertaking. Let us hear his voice, who bids us labour for unperiſhable meat, and to do with all our might what is meet to be done.

NEXT we ſhould imitate them in their walking by *Faith* in the promiſes. Let us ſhut the eye of ſenſe upon all viſible things, and often open that of faith upon the glorious realities of eternity. With theſe objects let us ſeriouſly converſe, let us embrace them, ponder them, and rejoice in them. It is a great injury to this ſpiritual life, that we make ſo little uſe of this fundamental principle of all practical religion, which derives its main life and vigour from another world, and is utterly hid from ſenſe. It is only by believing meditations, that we draw down heaven into our hearts, or elſe aſcend up to it. Let it be our daily exerciſe to behold the bleſſed land in this proſpect, to ſee the promiſes afar off, to embrace and affectionately claſp about them, to evidence our intereſt in them, and thus to have our converſation in heaven. It is not enough, that we ſay we believe there is an heaven; there is much more than that in a life of faith; there are

many

SERM. XIV. many acts of the mind under the influence of that faith, as we find in thoſe believers *Heb.* xi.

LASTLY we ſhould after their example proceed heavenward with great *patience* and firm reſolution, be ſo poſſeſt of the worthineſs of the prize as not to be diſcouraged by any hardſhips. Let us expoſe all to ſhipwreck, ſo that we eſcape but with our ſouls, let neither perſecution, nor famine, nor any other evil turn us off from our reſolution, nor one thought be harboured of deſiſting from our ſervice or warfare, reſolving never to give out, but repeat and renew our endeavours. If the length of the ſervice or the delay of the reward tempt you to faint, and to think religion a tedious employ, I beſeech you remove that dangerous ſymptom by remembering how worthy the prize is of your patience and perſeverance, and that it will abundantly compenſate all delay, and yet, that it is but a little longer ere you'll reap. Beware above all, that you don't raſhly prefer preſent offers of carnal delights, as *Eſau* did, and which you will as ſurely repent at laſt as he did.

THIS is their *taſk*. Next let me preſs you to do it in conformity to them, *who are gone*

to

to inherit the promiſes. This is the *example* they ſet you, and this carries with it very cogent motives to work upon you.

1. THEIR great ſucceſs encourages you to follow them, it is an happy example. Conſider what is become of them who went in this way, they have fared well and repent i not; they are not preſerved indeed from death, for there is no road, in which that will not meet us, but they are to be found in heaven, in their inheritance there, and it ought to be conſider'd what it is they inherit, namely many exceeding great and precious promiſes, of a vaſt importance, which make in their accompliſhment an inheritance incorruptible, that never fades. Who of us can conceive what they have gained, what they enjoy? They inherit all things, for God is their God *Rev.* xxi. 7. And who can have more encouragement to follow? Can we deſire a better condition than theirs? Indeed had they miſcarried, had their labour been in vain, their patience loſt, this might diſcourage us to go after them, but they have obtained the end of their faith, and ſhall not we follow them, who have trackt out the way to heaven? Look up to them and take courage, behold them and become reſolved to go after them, that

ſo

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ſo you may ſhare in their joys: Would you be inheritors? You cannot take another way, nor have greater encouragement to go in it.

2. You have the ſame opportunities and helps as they had, beſides what has been ſaid already of the ſame or better promiſes. You may have the ſame aids of divine grace as they had, the ſame helps to faith and patience, and this ſhould ſurely have the ſame ſucceſs, for it is not by any chance or uncertain accident, that one man ſucceeds, for want of which another may miſcarry, as it is in common enterprizes; but there is one ſure invariable rule of God's proceedings in beſtowing the inheritance, ſo that where one ſucceeds, all ſhall ſurely do ſo, who take the ſame courſe.

3. IT is here intimated, that this is the way to go to them, who have won the prize, and to dwell with them. They were excellent perſons, whoſe examples we propoſe, and for that reaſon and perhaps alſo for other conſiderations, as our friends or acquaintance, they are deſirable company to live with for ever. Oh, let our honourable eſteem and affection for our departed friends be improved this way, that they may be as ſo many attractives

tractives to draw us towards heaven: Sure it ſhould be the more deſirable to think, that *there* many of our moſt valuable friends are, whom we ſhould gladly and eagerly follow the ſame way, that we may meet at the ſame end, and be joint inheritors of the ſame promiſes. The author of this epiſtle ſeems to have this in his thoughts, *Heb.* xiii. 7, where he exhorts them *to remember them, who had ſpoken to them the word of God, to follow their faith, and conſider the end of their converſation.* There is no way to meet again with our holy friends but this. It may be ſome of you have pious parents or other relations, who have gone this way before you; Oh, how cheerfully ſhould you follow, more eſpecially them, whom you have known and loved! How ſhould the hope of going after them make you to beſtir your ſelves, that where they are there you may be alſo?

4. CONSIDER the ſad conſequences of not following them. Then you ſhall not inherit the promiſes, nor ſhare in their great happineſs, which is the reward of diligence, faith, and patience; Nay, you ſhall never enjoy their ſociety, for unleſs you be like them, you cannot live and converſe together; no, if you

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follow not them, you follow ſuch as by ſloth and unprofitableneſs, by unbelief and ſenſuality, or earthly-mindedneſs are ſunk into endleſs deſpair, and have loſt all, even hope it ſelf. And how may ſome of you be upbraided by your pious parents or relations, who have ſet you the example in the text, Ah degenerate wretches, where is the reſemblance of the pattern we ſet you? Where is that holy zeal and faith, which we hoped had been tranſmitted to our poſterity? Where is the reſpect or love ſhown to us, when you have ſhunned the way, which might have brought us together for ever? Will you then, Sirs, inherit the eſtates of your anceſtors, and not their virtues? Will you fill up their places in the world, but not in the church of God. *Phil.* iv. 9? Whereas by following the example of our holy friends, and making their conduct the pattern of our imitation, we may ſtill maintain ſome communion with them, while they are thus in our view and remembrance, while we frequently contemplate what they *were*, and what they *are*, while we have their track before us, and are hoping to overtake them, and have it in our eye and thoughts to ſhare intereſts and comforts again.

SERMON

SERMON XV.

Chriſt entred into heaven as our forerunner.

HEB. vi. 20.

Whither the forerunner is for us entred, even Jeſus *made an high-prieſt for ever after the order of* Melchiſedec.

SINCE (as I have lately ſhewn) the author of this epiſtle in preſſing theſe Chriſtian *Hebrews* to perſeverance and holy diligence in their Chriſtian courſe makes uſe of this as an encouraging motive, *viz.* the ſucceſsful example of holy perſons, who had gone before and won the prize in the ſame way ver. 12. it is no wonder he ſhould afterwards preſent them with a greater and

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more encouraging example of this kind in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe diligence faith and patience were more nobly exerciſed and tried than any others, and whoſe reward and ſucceſs was accordingly much ſuperior.

FOR tho' indeed in the examples of ordinary men we have this advantage, that we ſee religion practiſed and exemplified, and the glorious crown obtained by men of like frailties and paſſions with our ſelves; yet on the other hand the entrance into heaven by our Lord Jeſus carries in it more encouragement from the conſideration of the relation, which he bears to us, and the dependance our felicity has upon his advancement.

THEY are in ſome ſenſe forerunners too, but not in the ſame manner as he, they have led us the way, but do not give us ſuch encouragement and aſſiſtance to follow.

THE author of this epiſtle having ſaid much to ſhew the grounds of our Chriſtian hope, and the conſolation it affords from the oath and word of God, the experience of others, and the ſtability of the object within the veil, he concludes the whole with this further remark, that Jeſus is entred into that ſtate, which is the object of our preſent faith and

and hope, and this under a double character. SERM. XV.

As it is *for us*, ſo it is as *a forerunner*, and *an high-prieſt* of the moſt excellent nature, and this is our great encouragement, the confirmation of our hope, and the attractive of our deſires; from whence I obſerve, *That it is the great ſecurity and confirmation of a Chriſtian's heavenly hope, that Chriſt Jeſus is entred into heaven for them.* Where there are three things to be conſidered.

I. THE place into which he is entred.

II. THE deſign of his entrance, and the character he there bears.

III. THE influence this has to encourage our hopes and deſires.

I. AS to the place, it is within the veil, that is, he is entred into the inviſible heavens, ſaid to be within the veil in plain alluſion to the veil of the *Jewiſh* temple, by which the moſt holy place was ſeparated from the reſt, which was not to be ſeen nor entred into, but on one day in the year by the high-prieſt only.

Now this was a very proper periphraſis, whereby to deſcribe heaven to the *Jews*, who very well underſtood the matters alluded to

SERM. XV. *Heb.* ix. 3. Indeed it is a proper repreſentation of heaven,

1. As it is to us an *unſeen* place. A veil is intended for covering ſomething from the ſight; thus *Moſes* put it on not only for that end before the tabernacle, but alſo for covering his face with it to hide it. So heaven is to us within the veil, there is a natural veil of clouds and intermediate regions between us and the ſeat of bliſs, which the ſharpeſt ſight cannot penetrate through.

WE ſee nothing at preſent of that glorious place, they are to us the things unſeen, and tho' we ought to walk in daily view of them, yet it is by faith and not by ſight. They are probably too bright for mortal eyes to behold; it is light inacceſſible, which like the face of *Moſes* muſt be covered from us. Beſides, God expects we ſhould truſt him for thoſe good things, which no eye hath ſeen or can ſee; we would fain indeed pry into them and put by the veil, we gueſs and imagine, but it is a ſecret to us, it is a myſterious buſineſs, what we ſhall be and ſee, when got within the veil, when the covert ſhall be taken off, and that dazzling glory ſhall preſent itſelf naked to our view.

2. HEAVEN

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2. HEAVEN is thereby properly repreſented as it is the *moſt holy* place, or place of ſeparation anſwerable to the oracle in the temple, for ſo it is plainly called in chap. ix. ver. 12. of this epiſtle.

SOME of the *Jewiſh* allegoriſts ſay, that the ſanctuary or the temple was intended for a reſemblance of the world. The outward ſanctuary ſignifies this lower world, the candleſticks and lamps repreſent the luminaries of the viſible heavens, the twelve loaves the fruits of the earth, and the inward part or the moſt holy repreſents the higheſt heaven: This is all mere imagination, but yet it is certain this laſt is a ſuitable figure of heaven in ſome particulars, in alluſion to which heaven is here deſcribed; for as that was moſt holy, ſo is heaven above, but few are clean enough to enter into it, and no others may. It is full of awful ſolemnity and the moſt deep expreſſions of high veneration: There is perpetual adoration, and the ſweet incenſe of chearful praiſes, there eſpecially our great high prieſt enters with his blood to intercede for us, with relation to whom it is here ſaid to be within the veil, to introduce the diſcourſe of Chriſt's prieſthood: There is the mercy-ſeat, where

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he preſents the prayers of all his ſaints; that is the place, which is fill'd with the divine glory and preſence; there the cherubim dwell about his throne; all is holy, the place, the work, the company is moſt holy; they above are ſeparated not only from the world, but even from the church imperfect below.

II. I COME now to conſider the deſign of Chriſt's entrance thither. This is intimated

1. BY a general expreſſion, *He is entred for us*, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, for our advantage, upon our account; not in our ſtead, ſo as to prevent our entrance into heaven, this would be but little comfort to us; but yet it is not merely for *us* that he is entred, ſo as that it ſhould not be for *himſelf* alſo, for doubtleſs he is gone thither for his own ſake to reap the expected reward of his faithful ſervices; it is for his own great intereſt and honour, for by it he has obtained a name above every name, and ſits down on a triumphant throne; he is now entred with great glory into his kingdom, and has obtained far more by it, than any of his ſervants ſhall.

BUT yet it is for *us* too, for he is entred in a double capacity, both his own perſonal one,

one, as he was the moſt holy uſeful faithful ſervant of God, to whom a liberal reward was due; and as he was our mediator alſo to act for us, and improve his own intereſt for advancing ours: Thus he died, thus he roſe again, and thus he lives and reigns for us; he neither forgot us in the perplexities of his ſuffering ſtate, nor is unmindful of us in the glorious greatneſs of his exaltation *Heb.* ix. 24.

2. BY the particular characters aſſigned to him there as entred for us, *a forerunner* and *an high-prieſt.*

(1.) HE is entered as *our forerunner*, or πρόδρομος ὑπερ ἡμων, *forerunner for us*, as ſome are for pointing the words.

NOW this may be conſidered either as denoting only a priority in general, or one that is before others, as he who out-runs the reſt in the race was ſo called, he that led way to the prize and out-ſtript others, and ſo the alluſion to a race is plainly carried on, *Heb.* xii. 1. And verily Chriſt Jeſus is *the* forerunner, others alſo are gone before, *viz.* thoſe who have finiſhed a pious courſe before us; but he is more eminently ſo, he has excelled all the ſaints in holineſs and ſervice, he has won the higheſt prize. He is the firſt, that has opened the

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entrance into heaven by his own virtue for others to follow in the way which he has conſecrated, leaving them a bleſſed example to look unto and carry in their eye.

OR it may denote a ſort of miniſterial office, *viz.* that of an harbinger, ſuch as great perſonages ſend to prepare their way, to take up quarters for them, and to give notice of their coming, that they may find all things ready. Thus *John* the Baptiſt was the forerunner to Chriſt, *Mat.* iii. and this in ſome meaſure ſeems here intended, in that he is ſaid to be a forerunner *for us*, whereas in the former ſenſe it was proper only *for himſelf:* For tho' he is not our forerunner in a ſubordinate ſenſe, as that notes an office of inferiority, or one ſent by us; yet as to the beneficial part of that office, he does diſcharge it as well as that of our advocate, and miniſters for us as our high-prieſt in that court of heaven, whither he is ſent and tranſlated by God.

OR once more, it may denote ſuch a forerunner as a general or captain is to the army he leads, *making* as well as *ſhewing* the way to them to follow and take poſſeſſion, and thus he is ſtyled *the captain* of our ſalvation, *Heb.* ii. 10.

SOME

SOME have carried the notion of Christ's being a forerunner further, and suppose him to be the first who entred at all into heaven, that the way was impassable till then, that the departed spirits of the antient saints were resting in some lower receptacle till Christ's entrance, who opened the new way to them, *Heb.* x. 20. *to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us*; thus it is more fully expressed, *Heb.* ix. 8. *That the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing*, it being prefigured by the seclusion of all from the oracle but the high-priest: Thus *Josephus* interprets it, and so do many primitive Christian fathers. SERM. XV.

ACCORDINGLY as soon as Christ departed, the veil was rent in twain, the figure was now ended, and the way to the true Holy of holies was opened. Consonant to this some may expound that article of Christ's descent into hell or *Hades*, of going to those lower parts to exalt the spirits there into an higher station, tho' not to see the face of God or the full fruition of his glory, which is reserved till after the resurrection of their bodies:

and

SERM. XV. and to this end might interpret *John* xiv. 2. of Chriſt's going to prepare the way.

I JUST mention theſe opinions, leaving you to judge of them as you ſhall ſee reaſon. However my text ſays only, he is a forerunner *for us*, not *for them*; and tho' others, ſuch as *Enoch* and *Elias*, may ſeem to have been before him and our forerunners too, yet they entred not *for us* as our harbingers, as he did.

AFTER all, without any more difficulties our Lord Jeſus was the forerunner to all, both us and them, upon another account, as he was the firſt, that roſe from the dead, and entred into heaven with body and ſpirit to do us ſervice.

I SHOULD next proceed to conſider him under his ſecond character, that of *an high-prieſt*, but this I ſhall reſerve to be the ſubject of another diſcourſe, and ſhall now proceed to the third general, *viz.*

III. TO ſhew, that this conſideration of Chriſt's being our forerunner affords great encouragement to our faith in ſeveral reſpects.

1. As a forerunner in the firſt ſenſe, *viz* one who has led the way, it gives us the

encouragement of an happy example and instance of future rewards. SERM. XV.

OUR hope is sometimes apt to be undermined by unbelief and distrust about the certainty of such a state in general, because we see it not: Now one real instance of this is a confutation to such unbelief, since Christ has by holiness made his way to heaven and pierced that veil, it follows that it is a way passable, and human nature is capable both in body and soul of a translation to that place, and a relishing participation of that felicity. As Christ's resurrection is a solid encouragement to believe our own with more facility, because we see in it a certain instance of the possibility of it, and the way which God designs to take with men, 1 *Cor.* xv. 12. So his glorification after an holy life through much misery and labour may assure us, that the like shall be to others, who walk as he walked; so that we may behold it with encouragement, as what raises our faith and hope to an high pitch of confidence, *Heb.* xii. 2.

2. IN the other sense as an harbinger it is yet more encouraging, because the very design of such is to signify, that they, whose fore-

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forerunner he is, are ſhortly to follow: It is a pledge of their coming ſoon, and eſteemed a public token.

CHRIST Jeſus were not a forerunner, as that is a relative word, if others were not to follow. As ſuch he declares his going to heaven to be to prepare a place for his ſervants, he is as it were fitting up an apartment in that glorious palace and city for their more honourable reception; he is laying in abundant proviſion and ſtore for their eternal and comfortable accommodation: This he has long ſince done, and is now expecting their arrival at the ſame country, where he is ready to meet them on the ſhore of eternity, and uſher them into the preſence of God, and to conduct them to their prepared manſion or poſt in the heavenly paradiſe.

NOW what does all this import, if it do not proclaim it to be the deſign of God and Chriſt, that his faithful ſervants ſhould go to that holy place within the veil, and be where he is? To what purpoſe ſhould he intimate there are many manſions in God's heavenly houſe, if none of his diſciples can come there? Had it been only ſaid, that he is entred as our high-prieſt, that might have well conſiſted with

with his going alone thither, and might have ſuggeſted ſome jealouſy, that we could not follow, becauſe the high-prieſt alone and no other with him muſt enter the typical holy place under the law, *Heb.* ix. 7. But to allay this it is ſaid he is our *forerunner* as well as *high-prieſt*, another relation is joined, with which it is not only conſiſtent, but it is neceſſarily implied, that others ſhould enter, tho' (as is ſaid in another caſe) every one in his order, firſt Chriſt, and then thoſe, that are Chriſt's. Some then are to enter in, and who ſhould they be but ſincere holy diſciples, who profeſs his goſpel, and obey his laws, who flee to him for refuge, and fix their hope on high? This has in it more than a bare promiſe, it implies ſomething of execution, when there is ſuch preparation for it.

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AND that Jeſus Chriſt is ſuch a forerunner to make way for us may eaſily be proved by the relation that holy ſaints ſtand in to him, and the union between them both. Can a tender parent enter into a large houſe or poſſeſſion, and his children not reckon themſelves to follow? Can an affectionate huſband be called to royalty and dominion abroad, and the endeared wife not reckon it a pledge

and

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and forerunning of her own advancement? Even ſo Chriſt Jeſus is our eſpouſed huſband, if we are chaſte virgins: He is entred into glory, and ſure it is in order to our following him; nay, he is our head and we his members; can he then arrive at his kingdom, and it have no relation to our intended approach to it? No ſure: In this near relation we may behold him as our *Prodromus* or forerunner, he is glorioufly exalted, and is now become the firſt fruits of them that are to be ſo. Hence we are not only riſen with Chriſt in a way of ſpiritual comfort, *Col.* iii. 1. but are ſaid in a ſort to be exalted with him and in him, *Epheſ.* ii. 6. In his exaltation God gives us an earneſt of our own, and from his actual poſſeſſion we receive a ſecurity, that we ſhall ſhare in it.

FROM the foregoing diſcourſe I ſhall make the following inferences.

1. How delightful a contemplation ſhould that of Chriſt's exaltation be to a Chriſtian, ſince in his glory we ſee a pledge of our own, nay, we ſee the way in which it is wrought, *viz.* by him as our forerunner! Here we ſee there is ſomething behind the veil, not diſcernible

cernible by mortal eyes. All does not end where our ſhort ſight does, there is ſunſhine behind the clouds, and there is a way through that veil, which the Redeemer has found, and conſequently we may do the ſame after him; nay, he is there in a public capacity in order to facilitate the arrival of his faithful ſervants: With what delight then and pleaſure ſhould we oft revolve this over in our moſt ſerious thoughts! SERM. XV.

2. This may teach us to admire his gracious love in doing ſo kind a part for us, to allow us to have a ſhare in the deſign of his own tranſlation, and to aſſure us of it before he departed, *John* xiv. 2.

IT was great glory he was going to, enough to have made his heart full of it to think what a glorious reward the Father would preſently beſtow upon him; ſo full of it, I ſay, as to exclude the thoughts of us and our concerns, it was ſo much for his own advancement, and ſo juſt upon his own account, that it is marvellous condeſcending goodneſs in him to place any thing of the deſign to our account; as if he went chiefly on that errand, ſo willingly does he embrace this office. And as he willingly owns that character, ſo he

as

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as carefully diſcharges it. It will be ſeen ſhortly by every true Chriſtian, what a place he has prepared, what a faithful harbinger he has been to all his members, when they arrive at thoſe manſions. Oh great and condeſcending love, worthy to be thought on, worthy to be admired, and every way worthy of our beſt returns!

3. THIS ſhould particularly fortify true Chriſtians againſt the fear of death. He, who died before you, has found the way into the heavenly ſanctuary; you have his intereſt there improved to the beſt for you, nay, you may expect he is waiting for you, and will be ready to meet you on the other ſide the grave. What an heartening conſideration is this! How chearfully may ſuch breathe out their ſouls into his hands! Go then freely after him, who has prepared the way, go, trace him through the valley of death, deſcend after him into the grave, purſue him through the clouds, till you overtake him in the heavenly glory.

4. THIS calls upon us to follow him, who is our forerunner, in both ſenſes of the word.

(1.) As

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(1.) As he is merely gone before *as an example*, it invites us to follow him by imitation. We have no example ſo advantageous as his, none has given us ſo perfect a pattern as he has done, and no example is ſo accurately deſcribed to our view, nay, none has gained ſo great a triumph. Trace him then in his holy ſteps, follow him in going about doing good, learn of him to be meek and lowly, ſtoop with him in ſelf-denial, hold your peace with him when reviled, take up your croſs and follow him in patience and holy reſolution: Seek no kingdom in this world, nor contend earneſtly for it, but deſpiſe both the honour and the ſhame, the crowns and the croſſes of this world, as he did, by real mortification to all below. Nor ſhould it diſcourage us, that we cannot reach to that height of true piety that he did, nor be tranſlated to the uppermoſt pinnacle of the temple, to which he is advanced; for he expects in us the proportion only of members, not of the head, beſides that our reward muſt not be expected to be equal to his. But ſuch as he was, ſuch muſt we be in the main, of ſuch principles, ſuch temper, practices, and deſigns. But alas, how few are there who

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have him in their eye, or aim at ſuch a mark as conformity to him! And yet how is he our forerunner, if we do not run after him, tho' we cannot keep pace with him? Be not therefore ſlothful, but followers of him, who through faith and patience is gone to poſſeſs the inheritance.

(2.) As he is gone before us *as our gracious harbinger*, it encourages us to haſten after in our affections, inclinations, and deſires. Why did he go to prepare a place for us, but becauſe we are ſuppoſed willing to go thither? And ſurely we ſhould not only long to go, where we have ſo valuable a friend gone before, but much more, when he is gone to make preparation for us. Would we then diſappoint him and his gracious deſign by being unwilling to leave the world and tarrying here for ever? Has he made all ready, and ſhall we be unready through our diſinclination? It rather becomes us to be making haſte after him, ardently wiſhing to ſee the manſions he has prepared. For if indeed he be our forerunner in this ſenſe, it implies he is expecting and waiting for us. With what vehemence then, with what joyful inſatiable deſires ſhould a ſoul breathe after heaven,

ven, who has not only preparation made for him, but a gracious Saviour looking for his arrival to enjoy it? SERM. XV.

5. LASTLY, it concerns us to get our hope well grounded on this, and to live in the conſtant exerciſe of it. See that he be yours in other relations, your quickening head, your ruling Lord, your prevailing inſtructor, and then he will be yours in this reſpect alſo. He was ſuch to theſe *Hebrews* and to his own diſciples, and all ſincere tho' frail Chriſtians may lay this claim to him. Then exerciſe this hope as they, who know they have ſuch a friend in heaven to prepare for them and receive them there.

WITH ſuch an anchor we may defy all the ſtorms and tempeſts of this life, ſince neither life, nor death, nor perſecution can drive us from it. Supported by this hope we are carries aloft and ſet like thoſe on very high hills above the clouds, who ſee it thunder and ſtorm below, while they are ſerene and quiet. It was this made *Moſes* rich enough without the treaſures of *Egypt*, and glad enough without the pleaſures of ſin.

LET us therefore learn to elevate and raiſe our ſouls by conſidering this great foundation in

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the context, an hope relying on the word, nay, the oath of God, an hope entring within the veil, and which ſees a forerunner and an high-prieſt there able to ſave to the uttermoſt. Sure it ſhould be felt in every Chriſtian's breaſt, and is quite another thing from that poor worldly hope men talk ſo much of, and will afford every heir of the promiſe ſtrong conſolation and comfort.

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

Chriſt entred into heaven as our High-Prieſt.

HEB. vi. 20.

Whither the forerunner is for us entred, even Jeſus *made an high-prieſt for ever after the order of* Melchiſedec.

IN a former diſcourſe from theſe words I have already ſhewn what is meant by entring within the veil, the place where Chriſt is gone to, and ſpoken to the firſt character, under which he is here conſidered, *viz. Our forerunner.*

I COME next to the conſideration of the other character he eminently bears, *viz. An*

SERM. XVI. *high-prieſt*; and here I ſhall treat of theſe four particulars.

I. WHAT is implied in the office of *high-prieſt*.

II. WHAT is implied in Chriſt's being an high-prieſt *after the order of* Melchiſedec.

III. FOR whom it is that he thus enters as an high-prieſt. And,

IV. How or by what authority he became an high-prieſt.

I. I AM to ſhew what is implied in the office of *high-prieſt*. An high-prieſt in general imports the chief of them, who miniſter in ſacred offices, or officiate for the people in things appertaining to God, *Heb.* v. 1. It ſuppoſes other prieſts inferior to him, in relation to whom he is called the *high* prieſt. All true Chriſtians are ſaid to be prieſts unto God, *Rev.* i. 5. but he is the high-prieſt: Or rather he is ſo called in relation to that character borne by others before him, in alluſion to whom he is ſo named.

IT was not peculiar to the *Jews* to have this office among them, for the *Romans* had their *Pontifex Maximus*, which the Emperors annexed

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annexed to the Imperial dignity, and till *Gratian*'s time conſtantly aſſumed to themſelves. But becauſe the apoſtle is writing to the *Jews*, and does evidently all along compare Chriſt's high-prieſthood with that under the law, we muſt therefore guide our inquiry about it from the office of the *Jewiſh* high-prieſt; tho' we muſt ſtill remember the difference between the order of *Melchiſedec* and that of *Aaron*, of which afterwards.

Now the chief and perhaps the only part, which was proper to the high-prieſt as ſuch, and diſtinguiſhed him from all others, was his making atonement in the moſt holy place on the day of expiation once a year, which was the great and general atonement for all *Iſrael*; therefore the text ſays, *he is entred within the veil as our high-prieſt*, becauſe it was peculiar to the high-prieſt on that day to enter within the veil, which ſeparated the oracle from the reſt of the ſanctuary, at which time he with great ſolemnity carried the blood of the ſlain goat and bullock into the moſt holy, and there ſprinkled it ſeven times upon and before the mercy ſeat, *Lev.* xvi. and burnt incenſe before the mercy ſeat, till the place was filled with ſmoke; and this was all the

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peculiarity belonging to his ſtanding office, at leaſt all the apoſtle has regard to, in making this atonement.

HERE it may be obſerved, that the ſlaying the ſacrifice was not proper to the high-prieſt; other prieſts and Levites, nay, any man might kill his own ſacrifice for ſin, *Levit.* i. 5. and the Jews allow it even at the paſſover, as *Philo* expreſly informs us. So 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 11. the prieſts had the ſprinkling of the blood upon the altar as proper to them, and the high-prieſt had this proper to him to ſprinkle it on the mercy ſeat in the moſt holy place; which abundantly ſhews us, that it was not the ſlaying the ſacrifice, which made the atonement; that was only preparatory to it, but the atonement itſelf was made by the high-prieſt going with it in an humble manner to make interceſſion at the mercy ſeat, *Levit.* xvi. 17. The atonement was made in the holy place, not where the ſlaughter was, the carrying the blood was a ſort of emblem of their own deſerts to die, a ſymbolical way of confeſſing their ſins, when they came as penitents to implore mercy, for at the ſame time all the people were to faſt and humble themſelves, and in this way the high-

prieſt

priest by his intercession made atonement with the blood, *i. e.* obtained mercy. SERM. XVI.

Now to apply this to our Lord Jesus: His being styled an High-priest carries with it an allusion to what I have been saying. It implies, that some sacrifice had been first slain before he ascended. He had indeed suffered a violent death, which was an acceptable spiritual sacrifice on his part in the patience, humility, and obedience he exercised under it, *Ephes.* v. 2. but this was no part of the priestly office to be the sacrifice itself, no, the high-priests carried the blood of others, and herein Jesus Christ differed from them. However there was some resemblance in this, that till he was slain he was not to enter into heaven in the capacity of an high-priest, not till his own sufferings had fitted him for it, and he had by this obedience approved himself to God, *For in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest to make reconciliation for the sins of the people,* Heb. ii. 17.

BUT the main resemblance lies in this, that like the high-priest he is now entred through the veil into the most holy place, *viz.* into heaven,

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heaven, there to appear for us, *Heb.* ix. 24. and ſo to make atonement or obtain mercy by his interceſſion at the mercy ſeat or throne of grace. The atonement was to be made *in* the moſt holy place, *not without*, which ſignifies, that Chriſt's atonement was not made *on earth*, ſo much as it is *in heaven* by entering there to appear as our advocate. It was the offering made of the blood before the mercy ſeat, which made the atonement, not the killing the beaſt; accordingly Chriſt by offering himſelf in heaven or preſenting himſelf there obtains our pardon on repentance; of *this offering* it is we read, ver. 25. not *that on the croſs*, anſwerable to the high-prieſt's offering in the holy place, ver. 7. He is an high-prieſt *in heaven*, chap. viii. ver. 1. for he could not properly offer any thing *on earth*, ver. 3, and 4. therefore his offering ſpoken of in this epiſtle is undeniably his offering himſelf in heaven, in acting and interceding for us there. As the high-prieſt carried incenſe and made ſupplication in the moſt holy place with the names of all the tribes on his breaſt, while the people were praying without *Lev.* xvi. 12. *Luke* i. 10. ſo Chriſt preſents his prayers with ours, and while we

are

are praying *without*, he is offering incenſe *within* the veil, joining his mediation to make all acceptable. See *Pſal.* cxli. 10. *Rev.* viii. 3. which laſt is a plain alluſion hereto. SERM. XVI.

HERE is ſufficient whereon to ground the character of his being an high-prieſt, nor need we aim to make him and them agree exactly in every thing, nor can we. It is ſaid chap. ix. ver. 12. that Chriſt with *his own blood* is entred into the holy place, as the high-prieſt did with *that of goats and calves*; but it is evident it is metaphorical, not material, blood; all the virtue of the Jewiſh ſacrifices lay in their being ſlain and the blood ſeparated, but Jeſus Chriſt is entred alive without any material blood in his hand to preſent, becauſe all their atoning virtue lay in their death, but Chriſt's propitiatory virtue is in his being alive to intercede; dead blood is not what he has carried with him, but yet the virtue of his death he has in ſome ſenſe carried with him, that which God delighted in, *viz.* the patience, obedience, and regard to the honour of God, which he ſhewed in ſubmitting to the death of the croſs, which recommended him highly to God, and intitled him to ſo great dignity and favour: And in the acceptable

virtue

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virtue of this excellent obedience he intercedes, nay, beſtows pardon.

HENCE I ſuppoſe it is, *viz.* in that he ſaves by his life more than by his death, that the ſcriptures attribute our pardon and ſalvation to *his reſurrection*, rather than *his death*. *Rom.* iv. 25. *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raiſed again for our juſtification.* Rom. v. 10. *If we were reconciled to God by the death of his ſon, much more being reconciled ſhall we be ſaved by his life.* And again Rom. viii. 34. *It is Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again, who is at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us.* The reaſon, I ſay, ſeems to be, becauſe while dead he could not as high-prieſt enter within the veil to make atonement in the moſt holy place, *viz.* into heaven, where his buſineſs as high-prieſt lies according to the apoſtle; for we read nothing of his being ſuch till his aſcenſion into heaven.

THE upſhot then of this is, that Jeſus Chriſt as high-prieſt is gone to be our advocate for all needful mercy. This is but what himſelf ſaid to his diſciples, that he would pray for them, and what the other epiſtles mention, tho' not in the pontifical phraſes uſed

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in this epistle to the *Hebrews*. What sort of intercession he makes in heaven we must not peremptorily determine, some suppose it to be wholly authoritative, because he is at the right hand of God, and they suppose that to be inconsistent with supplication, but since that dominion is only over creatures and under God, it seems not inconsistent for him, who is over all, to do an act of subjection to him, who has set him over all. It is certain himself speaks of his intercession in heaven, *John* xiv. 16. and the word *intercessions* being number'd among other words, which express petitioning, 1 *Tim.* ii. 1. seems to favour the supposition of ordinary address, at least for that power, which he receives from his Father, by which he is able to help, bless, and save us. However he certainly interposes in our behalf, the great God for some wise ends chusing this way to dispense his favours, and admit our services by this great high-priest, whom he has set over the house of God. SERM. XVI.

II. I AM to shew what is implied in his being an high-priest *after the order of* Melchisedec.

HERE

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HERE it will be proper to conſider,

1. THE perſon, of whoſe order he is an high-prieſt, *viz. Melchiſedec.* The learned world have made a mighty ſtir to reſolve the queſtion who he was, who is ſo oft inſiſted on in this epiſtle, but an elaborate diſquiſition about it is ſcarce worth our while. Beſides a ſhort tranſient hiſtory of him in *Gen.* xiv. 18, 19, 20. we have only an obſcure reference to him *Pſalm* cx. 4. where what the text attributes to our Lord Jeſus had been propheſied of.

ORIGEN ſuppoſes him to have been an angel in human ſhape, ſome antients ſaid he was the Holy Ghoſt, other moderns ſay, that he was Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, a likely matter, that he ſhould have lived ſo long on earth as king and prieſt at *Salem* before the ſcriptures mention him to be born; beſides, then he muſt have been a prieſt of his own order, which would have been a trifling tautology; at that rate *Abram* had ſeen his day indeed, but not by faith as Chriſt means. True, theſe with *Cunæus* and ſome others ſuppoſe it only an apparition in a prieſtly habit, that vaniſhed again ſoon; but it is not to be ſuppoſed, that *Abram* paid his reſpects to him, and gave him

him the tenths of his ſpoil without being first ſatisfied, who he was and whence he came, if he was a ſtranger to him. SERM. XVI.

IT is vain indeed to ſay who he was, becauſe he has no pedigree in ſcripture, and having no father or mother mentioned how ſhould any know who he was? this would ſuppoſe his family might be found out. It ſeems in general moſt natural to ſuppoſe, that he was ſome noted king of that country of *Canaan*, who was alſo an high-prieſt of his people, which office belonged to the chief and firſt of the family. He was certainly a true man, and therefore no doubt had father and mother as other men have, only there being nothing of it on record it is to appearance as if he had none; and here lies the whole myſtery.

I CANNOT but obſerve from this, in that *Melchiſedec* was a king of righteouſneſs and prieſt of the moſt high God, that the knowledge of the true God and his worſhip was not wholly loſt out of all the world, except *Abram*'s family. Here was a country, in which his worſhip was maintained, tho' we know of no particular revelation they had, only the light of reaſon and common tradition:

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dition: Yet here was a public high-priest and king, priest probably to his little kingdom, and held in sacred veneration by *Abram* himself, who received his blessing, and being a king of righteousness, no doubt but he had subjects, who were so too; nay, this man is made a representative of Christ's high priesthood, rather than any of the *Aaronical* order, as of an order superior to it, which is

2. THE next thing to be considered, *viz.* in what respects Christ Jesus is an high-priest of this order, or answerable to *Melchisedec.* Why is he so characterized?

I ANSWER,

(1.) HE is made such a priest on purpose to shew the *Mosaical* dispensation to be disannulled by God's appointing another high-priest, such as with that law was inconsistent.

TO make out this you may see, that the Apostle's design is to convince these *Hebrews*, that the former *Mosaic* constitution was now antiquated, and to be laid aside by them, for its weakness chap. vii. ver. 18. This disannulling he proves by the change of the priesthood ver. 12. which was so essential to that constitution, that it must needs fall with it.

This change of the prieſthood he ſhews muſt neceſſarily be granted by them, who own Chriſt Jeſus to be God's high-prieſt, as the Apoſtle aſſerted, becauſe he could not be a legal prieſt by that law, not being of the tribe of *Levi* nor of the order of *Aaron*, ver. 13. 14. and yet that Jeſus Chriſt was to be an high-prieſt of another order, and ſuch as muſt infer the abolition of *Moſes*'s œconomy he proves from their own law, which declared the Meſſias ſhould be a prieſt after the order of *Melchiſedec Pſalm.* cx. 4. *Heb.* vii. 21. and tho' the modern *Jews* would apply that text to *David*, yet it is evident he ſpeaks the words himſelf of another perſon, *He ſaid to my Lord*, and both Jeſus Chriſt and the *Jews* of his days underſtood them of the Meſſias *Mat.* xxii. 43. that *David* called him Lord in the ſpirit (*i. e.* of prophecy, a Lord, that ſhould ariſe thereafter,) which they denied not, but could not anſwer his queſtion upon it, not underſtanding Chriſt's ſpiritual kingdom, of which *David* was to be a ſubject, and ſo Chriſt his Lord; whereas in ſuch a worldly kingdom as the Phariſees dreamt of under the Meſſias *David* being dead could have no place nor reaſon to call him Lord.

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So then by their own law a Meſſias was to come, who was to be an high-prieſt after the order of *Melchiſedec:* Now that was to be different from the order of *Aaron*, as the author of this epiſtle proves *chap.* vii. becauſe he was not of *Abram*'s ſeed, nor could make out ſuch a pedigree as their law made neceſſary, therefore it is ſaid ver. 3. that he was without father or mother or deſcent, that is, none did appear, and conſequently no regard was had to his pedigree, altho' an high-prieſt. *q. d.* Your law requires an exact proof of a pedigree from *Levi* and *Aaron*, elſe there can be no admiſſion to the prieſthood, but this high-prieſt *Melchiſedec* was owned as ſuch without taking any notice what family he was of, of which there is no mention, as if it were on purpoſe to ſhew, that he was not ſuch as their *Jewiſh* high-prieſts muſt be, and ſuch an one as he was, the Meſſias is foretold to be; and therefore the prieſthood being thus to be changed by him, there muſt neceſſarily be a diſannulling of their law under that Meſſias, who is an high-prieſt after the order of *Melchiſedec*.

(2.) HE is ſaid to be after the order of *Melchiſedec* to ſhew him to be a royal or regal prieſt, a prieſt and ſovereign king alſo;

Melchiſedec

Melchisedec had both these powers in one, *he was king of* Salem, *and priest of the most high God*, chap. vii. ver. 1. These characters were often joined together, *Rex hominum divumque sacerdos.* The supreme magistrate thought to increase the people's reverence by officiating in sacred matters as *Pontifex Maximus*, so far was that office from being counted a diminution to their honour, that majesty itself was made more illustrious by it. SERM. XVI.

IN the *Jewish* law these two offices were not conjoined but usually distinct, and tho' *Eli* was both judge and high-priest, yet when they had kings, the offices were separate, and in two different tribes. The blessed Jesus therefore was to be after the order of *Melchisedec*, because he was to have a mighty dominion as King of Kings, and Lord of angels and men. He is both a Prince and a Saviour, has all power given him in heaven and earth, and is the appointed judge of all men, whose authority we must revere, whose laws we must obey, and whose honour and interest we must truly serve before the dearest interest in the world.

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(3.) A THIRD reaſon is to ſhew the perpetuity of his office, *Thou art a prieſt* for ever *after the order of* Melchiſedec.

WHETHER after having anſwered the end, for which it was inſtituted, this office ſhall not ceaſe, as well as his mediatorial kingdom ſhall be delivered up to his Father, the text ſays not, for tho' it be ſaid to be *for ever*, yet that is uſually ſaid of things, which ſhall remain as long as the preſent diſpenſation, to which they ſerve, continues, as long as there will be occaſion for any thing of that nature, eſpecially when it is to endure to a very remote period; So *Numb.* xxv. 13. *Phineas* the ſon of *Eleazer* the ſon of *Aaron* is ſaid to have the covenant of *an everlaſting* prieſthood, and yet that order of *Aaron* is long ſince ended.

BUT here it plainly imports more, *viz.* an office, that ſhall never be ſuperſeded, ſhall never have a ſucceſſor as thoſe mortal prieſts had, of which there was a ſhadow and reſemblance in *Melchiſedec*, which is emphatically noted by the Apoſtle, that it is *for ever*. Not that *Melchiſedec* was immortal, but there being no mention of the end of his days, nor of any ſucceſſor to him, this had the

the figure of a perpetuity, and in an allegorical way of ſpeech he is ſaid to abide a prieſt continually, *chap.* vii. *ver.* 3. like to a ſon of God, or an angel ſays Dr. *Whitby.* SERM. XVI.

THE *Jewiſh* high-prieſt was but for a while, and during that law it was exerciſed by mortal men, and kept up by many ſucceſſions, ver. 23. but Jeſus Chriſt lives for ever in an immortal ſtate, and an incorruptible temple not made with hands, and is ſucceeded by none. He does all alone, they oft repeated their entrance within the veil every year, he once for all preſents himſelf in heaven.

THUS it is that the author endeavours to perſuade the *Hebrew* converts, that the goſpel was a better religion, or rather a better diſpenſation, than that of *Moſes*, having a far more excellent and nobler high-prieſt, even Jeſus Chriſt, made a prieſt *for ever* after the order of *Melchiſedec*.

III. I AM in the next place to conſider, for whom it is that Chriſt thus enters as an high-prieſt. *For us*, theſe words extend to both the characters mentioned in the text, but more eſpecially to this of high-prieſt, for ſo it is expreſly ſaid, *chap.* ix. *ver.* 24. That

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Chriſt is not entred into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven it ſelf now to appear in the preſence of God for us. And indeed herein he differs from the other *Aaronical* high-prieſts, for they were of like ſinful infirmities with the reſt of the people, and conſequently needed an expiation for themſelves alſo, chap. v. ver. 2, 3. *By reaſon hereof he ought as for the people, ſo alſo for himſelf to offer for ſins.* The high-prieſt had a ſin-offering of a bullock, with which he was firſt to make atonement for his own perſon and houſe, and then for the people he had another ſacrifice. Likewiſe his firſt entrance into the holy place with blood was on his own account, and then afterwards on that of the people. *Levit.* xvi. 11, 15.

BUT now it is not ſo with Chriſt, he is entred *for us* only, and not *for himſelf* under this character. He was the lamb without ſpot, that needed no atonement nor pardon, of whom God teſtifies, that in him he was well pleaſed; God had nothing to lay to his charge, whereby he had offended juſtice or needed mercy. In the miſtaken ſenſe of the malignant and vulgar *Jews* he was judged

to

to have ſufficiently deſerved puniſhment as a malefactor, but ſee how the prophet corrects that error, *Iſaiah* liii. He is entred with his blood within the veil upon the ſame account, as that on which he ſhed it. On our behalf he died, and for us he mediates and intercedes, and pleads his own blood at the mercy ſeat for our forgiveneſs. On his breaſt are the names of his *Iſrael*, of whom he is ever mindful in his glorious ſtate, as well as in his low abaſement. SERM. XVI.

IV. How is it that Chriſt became an high-prieſt? The text ſays he is *made ſo*, that is, he is ordained and commiſſioned ſo to be by God himſelf; for had he aſſumed this office to himſelf he could not have officiated acceptably and with full authority, ſince there could be no aſſurance, that his blood and mediation would be accepted, unleſs God had appointed him, becauſe whatever value there was in that precious blood and powerful interceſſion; yet it is God's great mercy, that allows it to be prevalent for us; Chriſt Jeſus therefore is commiſſioned by God for this office, him the Father hath ſealed, this is expreſly ſaid, chap. v. ver. 4, 5. *And no man taketh this honour to himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was*

SERM. XVI. Aaron, *ſo alſo Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an high-prieſt, but he that ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.* As under the law it was by divine authority (both the office and the perſon) in the *Aaronical* line, not who could make the moſt intereſt to get this preferment, (tho' in after times from the captivity it was often ſo,) ſo alſo was Chriſt's prieſthood, which was confirmed to him by an oath, *chap.* vii. *ver.* 21. a more ſolemn commiſſion than the other high-prieſts ever had. Thus was he ſent of God, and his ſervice is moſt ſure of acceptance.

I COME now in the laſt place to make ſome uſes of the foregoing diſcourſe.

1. WE muſt here acknowledge the great and continued love of our Lord Jeſus to us.

IT is of high concern, that we ſhould preſerve an affectionate regard for our bleſſed Saviour, and ſince love and benefits beſtowed is the great motive of love, we muſt not overlook his abundant kindneſs to us. It is ſaid he loved his own to the end, and we may here perceive it to be more perſevering than to the end of his life on earth. He continues

tinues a compaſſionate high-prieſt ſtill, and when he left the world, it was with the kindeſt expreſſions, *I will pray the father for you, I go to prepare a place for you*, John xiv. SERM. XVI.

INDEED his own grievous trouble made it ſo needful to eye his own future glorification, that it were not to be wondered it ſhould wholly poſſeſs his mind, but yet in his great love to his diſciples he has their caſe ſtill at heart, and ſpeaks as if the great deſign of his going was for them. Shall we then not love him, who yet loves us ſo tenderly? And while he acts for us above, ought we not to ſerve, and do, or ſuffer for him here below? ſince being thus perſuaded, we may with *Stephen* as it where behold the heavens opened, and Jeſus ſitting at the right hand of God, *Acts* vii. 56.

2. THIS ſhould be a great encouragement to us in our addreſſes to Heaven for relief under all our afflictions and miſeries, for ſo the Apoſtle exhorts us *to come boldly to the throne of grace*, from this conſideration, that *we have not an high-prieſt, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, ſin only excepted*, Heb. iv. 15, 16. nay, it is a mighty conſolation,

SERM. XVI. conſolation, when under a penitent ſenſe of great guilt we apply for pardon and forgiveneſs, for *if any man ſin we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*, 1 John ii. 1. True, God is of himſelf infinite in mercy, but it helps us to have a ſenſible pledge of it in Chriſt Jeſus. In his name therefore he bids us to pray the father, *John* xvi. 23. not in his authority only, (for ſure he had warranted them to pray before that ver. 24.) but uſing his name alſo or confiding in his mediation, that as they had believed in God, they ſhould believe in him too, *John* xiv. 1. God may think fit to grant through Chriſt what he thinks not ſo without him. We are prieſts but in ſubordination to this high-prieſt, who alone officiates within the veil, that throne of grace, which he has ſprinkled in our favour *Heb.* iv. 16.

3. LET this be improved to ſtrengthen the hope of Chriſtians concerning their final ſalvation. It is mentioned in the text as a matter, which affords great aſſurance to the heirs of the promiſes, that Jeſus is entred as high-prieſt for us. As a forerunner he has taken poſſeſſion and prepared a place, and that preparation

paration is chiefly made by the exercise of his priestly office there. SERM. XVI.

WHAT then should hinder a Christian's complete salvation? Does he want persevering grace, or fear the strength of temptation? Is not here relief sufficient? Cannot Christ Jesus obtain assistance, and say his grace shall be sufficient for him? Does he dread the guilt of daily infirmities, or some aggravating sin, which has betrayed him to the wounding of his soul? Can there be a more powerful antidote than that of Christ's entring within the veil with his atoning blood? In short whatever is wanting he can supply us with; and hence it is, that the scriptures lay the stress of a Christian's security on Christ's intercession, *Rom.* viii. 34. *Heb.* vii. 25.

LABOUR then so to please him, that he may espouse your interest, and then doubt not but he can save to the uttermost all that are truly obedient to him. Let this fill you with joy and peace in believing, look with great expectation for the remainder of your salvation, which must be accomplished by his life; *For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by*

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by his life, Rom. v. 10. triumphing by faith in him over all the powers of hell, over all your own humbling weakneſſes and ſins, while you foreſee the glorious preparation he has made for you, and how he will preſent you faultleſs before the throne of God. Let this hope revive you, and make you think little of all the clouds and trials of this preſent world, ſince you truſt you ſhall be ſoon called within the veil to ſtand your ſelves in the divine preſence, and taſte the conſummate fruition of your Redeemer's love.

LASTLY for caution, We muſt not think, that Chriſt Jeſus will ſave us, if we leave all to him, ſo as to neglect true holineſs and obedience ourſelves. He will, nay, he can ſave only the godly and the righteous, who live in obedience to his laws. He is the author of eternal ſalvation to ſuch only as obey him, *Heb.* v. 9. *I know you not* will be ſaid to all the workers of iniquity, to all ſlothful ſervants, let them come with never ſo much confidence, and plead never ſo many ſacraments and ordinances, or familiar eating and drinking in his preſence.

THERE are ſome, who ſeem to talk, as if it were a diſparagement to our Redeemer for them

them to have any regard to duties, which they call works; as if ſtrong confidence were enough on their part, and his interceſſion and atonement would do all, when they have lived carnal and worldly lives, deſtitute of that holineſs, without which none ſhall ſee the Lord: But this is deſperate preſumption, it is not *a ſaving* but *a damning* faith to expect ſalvation by Chriſt in our ſins.

WE muſt *come to God* by him, elſe we are not of thoſe, whom he is able to ſave; his mediation is not deſigned to ſave ſuch as are uncapable of it, but them only, who are made meet by true holineſs and unblameable lives. Virtuous works are no more a diſparagement to our Saviour's undertaking, than it is to a phyſician, that his patient is cured by carefully obſerving his preſcriptions. He is a friend to the obedient and willing, but no refuge to the obſtinately rebellious or careleſs.

SERMON

SERMON XVII.

The ſuppreſſion of public vice an honourable employment.*

1 SAM. ii. 30.

Them that honour me I will honour; and they, that deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed.

AS it is eaſy to apprehend the important conſequences of that excellent work, for the furtherance of which we are here met, *viz.* The endeavouring an effectual reſtraint upon the open indecencies of a lewd age: So I doubt not, but the trial, which ſome of you have made herein, hath convinced you more than ever, that not a few

* Preached at *Dublin* Octob. 4. 1698. before the Societies for Reformation of manners.

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few diſcouragements are like to attend the promotion of ſo pious a deſign; that the ſtrong man armed, after ſo long and quiet a poſſeſſion, is not to be turned out but with conflict and violence; that thoſe ſons of *Belial*, who, if let alone, will ſurely prove as thorns in your ſides by provoking the anger of heaven againſt us, are, when you thruſt them away, as thorns in your hands; ſo, that as *David* ſpeaks, *he that touches them, had need be fenced with iron and the ſtaff of a ſpear*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7.

SINCE therefore it is now my part to ſtrengthen your hands, that they may never hang down in the purſuit of ſo ſacred an attempt, I have judged it requiſite to lay before you ſome motives, that may be proportionable, both to the greatneſs of your task, and the variety of your diſcouragements.

AND I think there is enough contained in the text to anſwer my end; for it intimates your work to be honourable in God's account, and that it ſhall redound to your own immortal honour in the iſſue.

HUMAN nature never acts with more violence and force, than when it feels the power of aſpiring ambition after great renown, and

tho', my brethren, I hope the fading honour of this world is contemptible in your eye, as ſounding braſs, or as a tinkling cymbal; yet honour from God is a great thing, all ambition is juſt, but none too great, nor any contention too warm, where this is the prize. SERM. XVII.

How ſuitable an application to the preſent occaſion my text will admit of may better be ſeen after a little inquiry into the context. It is part of a ſad meſſage from God, and for the greater ſolemnity ſent by a man of God to *Eli*, who was over the tribes of *Iſrael* a judge; and over the houſe of God, the high-prieſt: How he came by the latter dignity, is not evident; both from ſcripture and *Joſephus* it appears, that he was not of the elder line of *Aaron*'s family by *Eleazer*, but of the younger from *Ithamar*, and conſequently not the legal heir to that honour; but ſometime, during the rule of the *Judges* over *Iſrael*, the high-prieſthood was tranſlated to the younger line; for what cauſe is not known: A very learned * author in the *Jewiſh* hiſtory ſuppoſes it might be becauſe of the miſcarriage of the high-prieſt in permitting *Jepthah* to ſacrifice his daughter, when he ſhould have counſelled him better out of the law of God; and this

A a ſuppoſition

* *Lightf.* Vol. II. *p* 1218.

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ſuppoſition of his may find ſome countenance from that relation of ſome of the *Jewiſh* doctors, which I meet with * elſewhere: They ſay, that *Jepthah* diſdained to go to the high-prieſt for a commutation, or releaſe from his vow; and he would not go to *Jepthah*, becauſe he did not aſk his help; therefore ſay they, Jepthah *was ſmitten with the palſy, and the high-prieſt was deprived of the ſpirit of God:* And if ſo much be true, the other is no unlikely ſuppoſition. By this it ſeems *Eli* in his poſſeſſion of that office carried a memorial of God's diſpleaſure againſt the neglecters of his honour, and yet himſelf incurs it the ſame way; not by any poſitive preſumptuous crime of his own, but by remiſneſs of checking the prophaneneſs of others.

THE iniquity of his ſons was come to an unſufferable and daring height, they proſtituted their ſacred function to their *ſenſuality* and luſt, as it is ſet down from verſe 12, to verſe 18. Such was their contempt of God, that tho' the tabernacle was his houſe, and they were only his guard and attendants, and the ſacrifices his proviſions, yet they would be ſerved firſt, and would carve for their own bellies, before it went to God's table, I mean, before

* *Tayl.* Duct. dub. *p.* 579.

before the fat was burnt on his altar. And being thus highly fed, *like horſes they neighed after their neighbour's wife*, Jer. v. 8. *They lay with the women at the door of the tabernacle*, ver. 22. as if they would affront God to his face, putting their filth under his noſe; thus his houſe was now made a den of harlots and adulterers, that afterwards was ſo of thieves and robbers; inſomuch that *men abhorred the offering of the Lord*, ver. 17. For it cannot but grieve conſcientious worſhippers to ſee the ſacred ſolemnities of religion paſs through unhallowed hands, that reap indeed the benefit of others reverence for God, while themſelves ſhew none. SERM. XVII.

BUT what is this to *Eli*, that he muſt ſuffer for other men's ſins? It was becauſe *he reſtrained them not*, chap. iii. ver. 13. He did indeed reprove them, chap. ii. ver. 24. He dealt gently with the young men; but impudent ſinners require ſharper corrections than friendly rebukes; like the unruly *Leviathan*, *they laugh at the ſhaking of that ſpear*, and thoſe arrows will not make them flee, *Job* xli. 28, 29. So that when better remedies are in our power, a bare reproof of bold ſinners is no ſufficient diſcharge of our duty;

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God counts this for nothing in *Eli*; He, as a magiſtrate, ſhould have made them public examples for a warning to others: For neglecting this God ſends him a ſevere meſſage, upbraiding him with ingratitude for paſt favours ſo ill requited; charging him with honouring his ſons above his God; for to ſave their reputation he let God's ſink and fall; and then recanting all his former thoughts of kindneſs, all his conditional promiſes, he threatens him and his family with utter ruin to the generations to come. The reaſon and equity of which procedure in this and like caſes he expreſſes in the words of the text, *Be it far from me, for them that honour me, I will honour.* As if he had ſaid after the manner of men, I had once a great kindneſs for thee and thy houſe, and hadſt thou concerned thy ſelf to vindicate my name by ſuppreſſing and puniſhing the wickedneſs of thoſe vile wretches, thou hadſt loſt no honour by it, I would have advanc'd thee to great dignity; but now far be it from me, to honour ſuch a deſpiſer of his God, no, 'tis fartheſt from my thoughts, thy name ſhall periſh, thy memory rot, thy family ſink, and thy poſterity ſhall continue only to be by their poverty and ignominy the

monuments of thy ſin, and my indignation; I'll reſerve my favours for them, that ſhall do me the ſervice, which thou refuſedſt. And that you may not think this proceeding to be any ſingular inſtance with *Eli* only, God lays it down as a general rule, *Them that honour me, I will honour, and they, that deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed.* SERM. XVII.

HAVING led you thus to a right view of the words, I ſuppoſe I ſhall do no violence to them by deducing from them this propoſition,

THAT they, who honour God by endeavouring to ſuppreſs and puniſh the ſcandalous crimes of prophane ſinners, ſhall have their zeal repaid with eminent returns of honour from him; while they, who are unconcerned for his glory in that matter, ſhall be the objects of contempt and diſdain.

THE latter branch may ſerve to enforce the former, which I ſhall proſecute under theſe general heads:

I. I SHALL endeavour to ſhew, that ſuch, as are ſincerely engaged in this deſign, do honour God in it.

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II. THAT God will repay their zeal by honouring them.

III. I SHALL apply the whole to excite and encourage you, that are or may be engaged in this happy affair.

I. THEY, who endeavour to ſuppreſs the ſcandalous crimes of the age, do greatly honour God; He, who is the beſt judge of his own honour, plainly owns it here, in that he charges *Eli* with failing to honour him by neglecting this work.

AND here I muſt conſider, *firſt* what it is to honour God, and *then*, how we may apply it to ſuch perſons. As for honouring God in general, it is not like his honouring us, which is by conferring ſome excellency or dignity upon us to make us greater than we were before: It is God's honour, that he is not capable of ſuch as this; he cannot be a more glorious exalted Being than he is. We can therefore honour God only ſuch ways as theſe, either *internally*, by high and lofty conceptions of his being and perfections, by being fill'd with adoring admiring apprehenſions of his infinite majeſty, wiſdom, power, and goodneſs;

neſs; making him the object of our chief e- SERM. XVII.
ſteem, and ſuperlative love. Or *externally*, by ſome ſenſible manifeſtation of this; of which open viſible honour, I am principally to ſpeak: And in general it is to be given one of theſe two ways.

(1.) WHEN we wipe off any diſhonour or reproach caſt upon God, preventing or removing what may tend to diſparage his perfections, to weaken his authority with men, to abate of his due reverence, or to render him cheap and mean in the eyes of any; this is to preſerve his honour.

(2.) WHEN we do any thing that repreſents him great and glorious to others, when we expreſs our own high thoughts of God, ſo as to give occaſion to others to raiſe their eſteem of him, whether it be by words or actions, and theſe either of worſhip or other obedience; ſo praiſe glorifies God, *Pſal.* l. *ult.* It declares his excellency, and raiſes admiration; any thing, that greatens God in the ſenſe of men, is an honour done to him.

Now I come to apply it by ſhewing, that they do thus honour God, who labour to ſup-

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preſs open prophaneneſs: And this will fully appear, if we conſider,

1. THAT open prophaneneſs is a great diſhonour to God, from the reproach of which theſe perſons ſeek to reſcue his name. Tho' the eyes of God are ſo very pure, that the leaſt mote of ſin offends them as truly as the greateſt beam, yet not in the ſame meaſure: God is diſhonoured, and his law affronted by every indulged ſin, be it never ſo well covered under the veil of ſecrecy, or diſguiſed by the art of hypocriſy; but then it is but like a private affront, which puts not half that diſgrace upon a man, as an open abuſe. Some reverence for God is yet preſerved among men, when the ſons of *Belial* do in outward behaviour imitate the ſons of God, when the devil dares not appear in his own colours, but, as of old in *Saul*'s time, ſhrouds himſelf under the prophet's mantle. But when men declare their ſin as *Sodom*, when their crimes are of the firſt magnitude, and in open view; when they ſwear in the market-place, reel in the ſtreets, and aſſemble themſelves by troops in harlots houſes; then the honour of God receives a deep wound, and the higheſt contempt is poured on that Being of infinite majeſty,

jesty, as tho' he were a being of no authority, whose will they dare at any time contradict, whose indignation they challenge, and whose threatnings they treat with mockery and scorn. Such things as these sink the esteem of God in the world, and make him contemptibly spoken of, *Rom.* ii. 23, 24. Some are tempted hereby to say, That he hath *forsaken the earth*, and minds not what is done there, *Ezek.* ix. 9. *Others*, That *God is like themselves*, not so much an enemy to their crimes, as some pretend, *Psal.* l. 21. And if such men go on without check in this manner, what will become of the honour of God at present? How will his authority and worship be upheld, or his memorial be preserved among men?

Now from this grievous contempt the friends of God would gladly see his name vindicated; which must be either by *reclaiming* such vile offenders, of which there is almost no hope, for can the *Ethiopian* change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *Jer* xiii. 23. then may such long accustomed over-grown sinners learn to do well: Or by *punishing* them with marks of public disgrace, this may prove a means of reforming them, who having no feeling in their

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their ſeared conſciences are in vain attacked with ſerious counſel and arguments, but it may be will learn, when taught, as the men of *Succoth* were by *Gideon*, with briars and thorns; or as *Manaſſeh*, by fetters and bonds: However, ſuch public puniſhments will deter others from an imitation, and will be an open teſtimony, that the community diſowns ſuch perſons with ſhame and indignation, and cannot with patience bear their inſolent affronts of the great God: Theſe methods will very much prevent the common contempt of God, they teach the people to look upon ſuch ſins with horror, as baſe and criminal acts; and thus in a good meaſure the honour of God is maintained by ſuppreſſing open immorality in the general.

AND among all the works of darkneſs that are common, I think there are none, againſt which the wounded honour of God more requires your zealous help, than againſt thoſe enormities, which you of *theſe Societies* have taken ſpecial cognizance of, *viz.* prophane ſwearing and curſing, breaking the ſabbath, and abominable uncleanneſs; crimes ſo heinous, that one can hardly ſay, as God to the prophet,

prophet, *Son of man, I will ſhew thee yet* greater abominations *than theſe.* SERM. XVII.

As for prophane oaths and curſes, the monſtrous ſins of our age, in which for a long time oaths have vied with words for number, and the ſtudied eloquence of the times hath been how to ſwear in the moſt thundering and terrifying dialect. Can any thing expreſs more ſcorn of the ſacred and tremendous name of God, than to make it the wanton by-word of our common talk, and the mention of it, the uſual fruit of our madneſs and fury? That men, when angry at their fellow-creatures, ſhould take their revenge on God by tearing and rending his dreadful name! That God and the devil ſhould both be regarded alike by them! For either word ſerves the turn, that which firſt comes in their way, and uſually where God's name is at the beginning of a ſentence in an horrid oath, the devil's is at the end of it in an helliſh curſe, and they ſeem to have an equal reſpect for both.

As for the breach of the *Holy Sabbath*, ſince nothing hath a more direct aſpect upon the honour of God, than the reverence and ſolemnities of his publick worſhip in united aſ-

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ſemblies; and ſince he hath intimated his will, that this be on one day in ſeven, it muſt needs be a bold ſtroke at his honour in them, that needleſly refuſe to contribute openly to it. It was a ſacrilegious thieving from God's altar, that was part of the heavy charge againſt *Eli*'s ſons, they would have God's portion, and force him to change without his conſent, *Ch.* 2. ver. 15, 16. And is not the ſacrilege as great in defrauding him of his time and the homage belonging to him? *John* ii. 15, 16. We find an unuſual flame of zeal in our Saviour's breaſt upon an irreverent prophanation of that holy temple, where God viſibly dwelt; and will not his day deſerve as zealous a vindication, as his houſe? Since they are two circumſtances of one rank, can any one tell me, why *Hallowed time* ſhould not be as ſacred as an *Hallowed place?* Oh, how diſhonourable then to God is their crime, who proſtitute his ſacred time to ſecular uſes! One is journeying, another phyſicking, and a third taking his pleaſure; and thus the Lord's day is made a very dunghill day, on which ungodly men throw all the refuſe-buſineſs of an idle or miſ-ſpent week; and many of theſe are under ſelf-condemnation,

demnation, while at other times they can stand up in the solemn assemblies to profess an obligation on their consciences to observe the fourth commandment; but yet alas, their hearts are not inclined to keep that law! SERM. XVII.

As for the shameless violations of the laws of *chastity*, they have been, both by God, and many pagan nations, numbred among the blackest crimes, insomuch that God hath peculiar reserves of vengeance for those that commit them: *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*, *Heb.* xiii. 4. It is such an awful and terrifying word, which dropt from the wise-man, that it may astonish us to think how any man's conscience can get over it without agonies of dread: *The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit, he, that is abhorred of the Lord, falls therein*, Prov. xxii. 14. And this was another of the scandalous and punishable faults of *Eli*'s sons.

Now these things shew, what mighty service you will do for the glory of God, if you can cover his name from these affronts of scornful men, either by suppressing their vices, or making them shameful and costly to such, as will give them harbour. Oh, how honourable would the name of God be, if we could

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could but ſee the day, when none ſhould dare to uſe it but with ſolemnity and reverence! When none ſhall take an oath, but as a part of the ſerious awful worſhip he owes to the omniſcient ruler of the world; when an univerſal ſilence on the ſabbath-day from the noiſe of ſecular buſineſs ſhall help to proclaim our profound veneration of God, while he is in his holy habitation.

2. SUCH perſons do directly honour God in their ſincere attempts of this kind, as they plainly manifeſt their own great eſteem of God, and reverence for his laws: What greater repreſentation can men give of God, than that he is a being whoſe reproach they cannot bear, one ſo great, ſo good, ſo loved by his ſervants, that they are content to vindicate his honour with the moſt expenſive zeal? Sure it is to the glory of God, when the world ſhall ſee he hath ſome friends, who dare eſpouſe his quarrel, ſome who are open advocates for his deſpiſed authority; that in a degenerate age there are ſome to proteſt againſt the uſurpation of Satan; ſo that if God be not honoured by a reformation of the public, yet in as much as you have vigorouſly contended for it, I may ſay as the Apoſtle, *On*

your

your part he is glorified, tho' on theirs he is evil ſpoken of, 1 Pet. iv. 14. SERM. XVII.

II. THE next general head is to ſhew, how God will honour them, that ſhew ſuch tenderneſs for his honour.

1. HE will honour them by his own eſteem and approbation of them; they may be the world's droſs, but they ſhall be God's jewels: The men of *Sodom* ſcoffed at *Lot* for reproving them, but God honoured him as a *righteous ſoul*, 2 *Pet.* ii. 8. The prophane crew may cry out upon you, as they againſt St. *Paul*, *Away with ſuch fellows, they are not fit to live*, *Acts* xxii. 22. But God will ſay rather, *Of you the world was not worthy*, *Heb.* xi. 38. And I hope God's good word is more to you, than the applauſes of all the world.

2. HE may probably place viſible marks of honour upon them in this life. Our good name is in God's keeping, who hath many ways to advance our eſteem, and when he pleaſes, our rankeſt enemies ſhall contribute to it, as *Mordecai* found. All promotion hath its riſe in the court of heaven, ſo that he permits

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mits or hinders it as he pleaſes, *Pſalm* lxxv. 6, 7.

HE can bleſs your ſubſtance unto abundance, and put you into the common road of honour. Or he may honour you another way, *viz.* by giving you great ſucceſs in your worthy attempts; and verily that will be no ſmall renown to be ſuch bleſſings in your places; to be conquerors over the vices of the age; to hide a multitude of ſins, and to ſave a nation from ruin. Such a good name will be a precious ointment of everlaſting ſavour.

AND verily, ſirs, God hath in part thus honoured you; it is to your glory, that not only at home, but abroad in the neighbouring kingdom, ſome of us have heard the fame of your zeal. I may ſay to you, as St. *Paul* to the *Theſſalonians*, 1 *Theſſ.* i. 9. (only putting your *zeal* inſtead of their *faith*) that it is every where ſpoken of. They needed not, that we ſhould tell them, for themſelves ſhew us concerning you: They can tell that *Dublin* is no ſafe harbour for the prophane and lewd to come to; that in it are magiſtrates and people, who profeſs themſelves a terror to evil-doers.

3. GOD

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3. GOD will not fail to honour them eminently in another world, and there great things ſhall be done to the man, whom the king of heaven ſhall delight to honour: There doubtleſs they, who have laboured to turn many from unrighteouſneſs, as well as they, that have turned many to righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine, not with the common and faint glimmering of the firmament, but with the more bright luſtre of the ſtars, *Dan.* xii. 3. Yea, they ſhall differ from other ſtars in glory.

I SHALL now proceed to make an application of the foregoing diſcourſe.

I. IS God ſo highly honoured by ſuch endeavours? Then let us all be concerned for his honour in this way: The text ſuggeſts to you the weightieſt argument in the world, *viz.* That you ſhould do it *for God's ſake*, and the moſt ſenſible argument, do it for *your own ſake*; it is the cauſe of God's honour and your own intereſt: But methinks nothing ſhould more move us, than the juſt but terrible interpretation God will put upon our neglect to promote this work, even, *that we deſpiſe him*; as tho' he were ſome contemptible being, whoſe glory we think not worthy

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our contending for. Dare we lie under ſo heavy a charge? Certainly, my brethren, we ſerve a God, whoſe honour well deſerves our pains to uphold it; nay, can we make him the great object of our ſolemn adoration, and daily homage? Can we think him meet, at whoſe feet to caſt our ſelves down in a reverend proſtration, and yet at the ſame time not judge his honour worth maintaining? This wou'd reproach our ſelves with the groſſeſt ſtupidity for worſhipping one with awful dread, whom we are content ſhould be made contemptible with others. Ah, baſe creature, that haſt ſuch a God, of ſuch infinite majeſty, wiſdom, and goodneſs, and yet refuſeſt to plead for him! A dumb and uſeleſs idol might ſerve thy turn, ſince thou careſt not how mean and vile the object of thy worſhip is.

BUT I would rather hope of you that hear me now, that you are rather inquiſitive, how you may contribute to God's honour in this affair: Probably you'll ſay, from ſuch a man as *Eli* God might expect it, he being an eminent magiſtrate had power to do what private perſons cannot, had we the ſword of juſtice, we would ſurely draw it in God's quarrel

rel and defence; but what can we do now? I answer, SERM. XVII.

1. IT is indeed most true, that magistrates have more eminent advantages for honouring God this way, which they should by no means lose. They are the life of every honourable enterprize, giving *credit* to it by their example, and *security* by the shelter of their authority, they are the principal wheel in all regular public motions; if they stop, or move heavily and unwillingly, the whole affair halts; tho' inferior persons should be never so zealous, yet without them they may sit down and lament, that the children are come to the birth, but there is no strength to bring forth.

FOR this reason it might be that *reforming work* was not pursued in the two late reigns, tho' the same persons were then living, that with such pious resolution began it since in the metropolis of the neighbouring kingdom; they were then formed, tho' more secretly, into a religious society; but there was so much wickedness at that time in high places, that such a design could find no countenance: But now that public authority, as a monument of gratitude for our late deliverance, hath declared war against those domestic enemies, I

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mean our ſcandalous impieties, now, that our king hath decreed this juſtice, and our parliaments have voted down profaneneſs, now that wholeſome laws are enacted, (may they be as irreverſible as the laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians!*) we ſee there wants not a number, who are ready to run to that banner, which is diſplay'd for the honour of God, ſo great is the magiſtrate's influence in this matter; yea, even of ſubordinate ones, that the cauſe of God's paſſing ſentence upon *Jeruſalem* was this, they could not find one that would *execute judgment*, not a magiſtrate would appear to countenance what was good, ſo that ſuch may be ſaid to be entruſted with *ten talents*, when private perſons have but *one* or *two*.

WHAT conſcience then ſhould they make of ſuch a great price in their hands? ſince this is the very expreſs end, which God, who gives them their power, and will ſhortly aſk an account of the uſe of it, hath aſſigned it to, *viz.* to be a *terror to evil doers*, Rom. xiii. 4. Were I to be their monitor, it ſhould be in *David*'s words, *Be wiſe O ye rulers, be inſtructed O ye judges of the land, ſerve the Lord with fear: Kiſs the Son, leſt he be angry,*

gry, Pſal. ii. 10, 11. I would humbly aſk, whoſe ſuperſcription do you bear? And ſince the truth, as well as a regard to your own honour, allows you to ſay, *God's*; then render to him the things that are his. You would not incur the ſuſpicion of diſloyalty to your prince by conniving at public affronts to his name or perſon; it would be with you a ſtrong argument, which they uſed to *Pilate*, *If thou let this man go, thou art not* Cæſar's *friend*, *Joh.* xix. 12, 13. It touched him ſo to the quick, that he durſt ſhew no more favour to our Bleſſed Lord: Why ſhould it not be a ſtronger argument to tell you, that you are not God's friends if you let profligate offenders eſcape? In a word, magiſtrates ſhould be like the heavenly orbs, not barely to roll over the people's heads in a lordly dominion, but alſo to afford a benign aſpect upon the commonweal. SERM. XVII.

2. YET as every *common ſoldier*, without leaving his rank, may do good ſervice in the battel, as well as his *commander*, ſo may all of you caſt ſome mites into this treaſury of God's honour in ſuch inſtances as theſe,

(1.) YOU may ſerve his honour in this matter by laying the impieties of the prophane

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before the magiſtrate in order to puniſhment. Be not aſhamed to come in as a witneſs for the Great King of heaven; *Eli* found many informers againſt his own ſons, this aggravated his crime in not reſtraining them. If magiſtrates will not execute juſtice, the guilt lies at their door, but if you do not carry it thither, I fear it will lie at your own: We oft ſpeak of bearing a *teſtimony againſt national ſins*; the beſt teſtimony, that I know of, is that before a magiſtrate in order to their being puniſhed. I truly think no cuſtomary bold ſinner, that openly offends, ſhould be ſpared, tho' he were our companion. Remember *Eli* ſuffered for ſparing the off-ſpring of his own bowels; when God upon the ſcornful language of a degenerate age cries out, *Who is on my ſide?* Who dares but offer himſelf? And as all ſhould do their part in general, ſo it were to be wiſh'd, that ſome, who are moſt capable of prudent active ſervice, would join themſelves to thoſe ſocieties, which are well enough known in this city, to bear part of the burden in this both *neceſſary* and *legal* deſign, as ſinners *join hand in hand* to eſcape puniſhment, ſo ſhould you join to prevent them; *Prov.* xi. 28. Let me tell you, in this

this caſe more than ordinary concern ſhould be ſhown, that paſſage of *Auſtin* being applicable here; *Non amat, qui non zelat.* He is hardly a friend of God, that is not warm and earneſt in this important ſervice. SERM. XVII.

(2.) MANY of you may honour God in this work with your *ſubſtance*, *Prov.* iii. 9. You know the precept is general, but when you come to put it in practice, it muſt be in ſome particular inſtance, and I know no occaſion, to which I may more properly apply it, than this in hand, being an affair that neceſſarily involves in it conſiderable expences, of which the occaſions are juſt and honourable. Much may be ſaid to commend ſuch liberality; let it be conſider'd, that it excels ordinary charity to the poor, which yet Chriſt will take eminent notice of in the day of judgment, and to which ſo many remarkable promiſes are made by him. The great advantage of which is, that God will allow it to have an ultimate reference to himſelf, *In as much as ye have done it to theſe, you did it to me*, *Matt.* xxv. 40. But in this caſe, what we give is more directly and immediately done to God without the benefit of ſuch a favourable conſtruction as that.

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BESIDES, ſuch occaſions do not offer themſelves ſo frequently as thoſe for common charity, you are always encompaſſed with objects of that nature, but you have not always ſuch noble deſigns on foot for the honour of God to require your aid; ſo that I may very properly here apply Chriſt's words on ſomething a like occaſion; *The poor you have always with you, but me ye have not always*, Matt. xxvi. 11. Take therefore the preſent opportunity.

(3.) YOU ſhould all further this bleſſed work, by giving it countenance and approbation; there is no doubt, but while immorality hath ſo many patrons, *this way* will be every where ſpoken againſt, and they that attempt the reſtraint of lewd men, tho' in the moſt regular way, will incur the *ill word* and *ill will* of ſuch, as either feel, or fear the juſt puniſhment of their crimes; and eſpecially if they be neceſſitated to uſe what may ſeem leſs generous methods, tho' very lawful, for the more effectual promotion of their deſigned end, as well as for their own ſafety, or if there ſhould be the leaſt imprudent ſtep taken; but do you rather cover their defects than aggravate them; it is no wonder, if when ſo filthy a houſe is ſweeping, ſome offenſive duſt

duſt ſhould fly about, which is to be borne in order to cleanſing. There are enough to animadvert and cenſure, take not their part; let *Baal* plead for himſelf, let prophaneneſs be its own advocate, be not you ſo much the friends of publicans and ſinners. SERM. XVII.

(4.) LET all favour and further it with their *earneſt prayers* to God for ſucceſs. It is an important conflict between God's kingdom and the devil's: Oh, hold up your hands in fervent requeſts, while the diſpute laſts. Favour O Lord, their righteous cauſe; proſper thou the work of their hands. Ariſe, and let thine enemies be ſcattered; and turn away tranſgreſſion from our *Jacob*, that iniquity may fall, and never riſe more. This ſhould be every one's ſupplication, that wiſhes the honour of God.

II. SINCE God will honour them that honour him, let this greatly encourage thoſe, who are engaged already in this honourable deſign, *God will honour you*. This conſideration ſhould make you renew your courage, and it will eſpecially ſerve to counter-ballance any ſcornful reproaches, which may be caſt upon you for your forwardneſs in this matter: It is perhaps not

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not the leaſt of Satan's artifices to make an odious repreſentation of a good work, and by the fear of obloquy to affrighten us from purſuing it, it will be but his uſual way, if he ſay, I will go forth and be a ſlandering *lying ſpirit* in the mouths of many againſt thoſe, who are active in oppoſing his kingdom of darkneſs.

IT will therefore be no wonder, if ſuch invidious ſuggeſtions as theſe ſhould be heard, *viz.* That you are the *troublers of Iſrael*, 1 *King.* xviii. 16. as *Elijah* was ſlander'd by *Ahab* for the like reaſon; that you are baſe *hypocrites*, who would be counted *ſaints*, but will cheat and lye, and do any ſecret evil; and that you make a *gain* of this work, and the like; you know what ſort of men they be, from whom ſuch venom may come; they, who are in the ſervice of the *father of lyes*, muſt be allowed to make uſe of a little of *his art*. But under all theſe calumnies, I ſay to you in God's own words, *Fear not the reproaches of men, neither be afraid of their revilings, for the moth ſhall eat them up like a garment*, Iſa. li. 7, 8. they'll come to nought, ſo long as they are without a foundation: However, in the mean time you have this to

oppoſe,

oppoſe, God will honour you, and therefore in contempt of all their reproaches, go on with reſolution, ſaying with *David* in the like caſe; *Let them curſe, but bleſs thou, Pſal.* cix. 28. SERM. XVII.

YEA, whatever other difficulties may occur, let them only ſerve to make the triumph of our zeal more conſpicuous; remember that you are ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, and therefore for ſhame muſt not flee for a little danger, you are bound *to endure ſome hardſhip*, 2 *Tim.* ii. 3. elſe you in effect ſay, that you will be ſoldiers for any thing but fighting; you'll give him any proof of your valour, except by expoſing your ſelves to hazard: How ridiculous a profeſſion would this be in a Chriſtian, in theſe expreſs terms? It is more becoming you to mount the breach, and *to ſtand in the gap.*

MY brethren, you have hitherto run well; Oh, that nothing may now hinder you, it would be very uncomfortable to thouſands of them that love God, if your zeal ſhould now decline, or if out of a regard to your own eaſe you ſhould ſeek a diſcharge from this warfare, when at moſt it is but at the height of the conflict. To prevent which, I ſhall offer you

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ſome ſerious motives, ſhewing you the evil conſequences of ſuch an unſeaſonable declenſion.

1. YOU will loſe the happieſt opportunity imaginable for public reformation. There are ſome great engines, which to put in motion is the greateſt difficulty; and to begin well is the hardeſt part of ſome enterprizes; ſuch a buſineſs is *public reformation*, which is very happily begun among us. The enemy, *viz.* all manner of iniquity came in as a flood, but the *ſpirit of the Lord hath lift up a ſtandard againſt him*, Iſa. lix. 19. unto which you and many others have repaired, who have marched up to the face of that bold enemy, ſo that he hath already made an halt; In and about this city you have had the cordial aſſiſtance of magiſtrates, to whom we may truly bear this teſtimony, that *they have not done the work of the Lord negligently, in withholding the ſword from juſt puniſhment*, Jer. xlviii. 10. *in the margin*, as fearing the curſe of God denounced againſt them who do. Your names have in great part been covered from reproach by their ſecrecy, or by their checks of ſuch, as dare threaten and reproach you for your duty; many of different perſuaſions have united in the bands of love for this work, and

ſome

ſome of rank and eminency, both in *church* and *ſtate*, ſo that now the work is become both *eaſy* and *honourable*, yea, and *ſafe* too in compariſon of what it hath been; you have gain'd with ſome labour and pains ſo much ground, that it is pity it ſhould be loſt again; after ſeveral thouſand convictions of ſwearers and curſers, we can obſerve a ſenſible alteration in men's dialect, thoſe throats, that lately were as *open ſepulchres*, Rom. iii. 13, 14. ſending forth a loathſome ſtench, are now, tho' not *painted ſepulchres*, (by aſſuming any great appearance of piety) yet cloſed and ſhut, and ſo do not give that public offence, nor are ſuch a common nuſance as formerly. How great an encouragement is this to proceed?

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IF we compare theſe things with the circumſtances, in which as to theſe matters we were not many years ſince, it may tempt us to uſe *Balaam*'s expreſſion of aſtoniſhment, *What hath God wrought?* Num. xxiii. 23. What a ſtrange turn is here in the affairs of our *Iſrael?* And doubtleſs if you go on with your wonted zeal, and eſpecially if the bulk of ſerious Chriſtians, who wiſh you ſucceſs, will promote it by their concurrent endeavours, we may hope for a more general triumph over the

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the kingdom of darkneſs: And can you think of loſing ſuch an opportunity as this, with any peace of mind? Verily, Sirs, I tell you, many have deſired to ſee theſe things which you ſee, and could not ſee them: Many mourners are gone off the ſtage, who would with all their hearts and ſouls have put their hands to this bleſſed work, had there been but ſuch laws, ſuch magiſtrates, and ſuch other encouragements as you meet with, but God did not honour them with ſuch advantages, you are the men, whom he hath choſen to truſt theſe choice talents with: ſhould you now after all loſe this ſeaſon, as great would be the guilt of neglecting ſuch a price in your hands, ſo there would remain no hope of ever ſeeing ſuch another; for when once laws of this nature are laid aſleep by diſuſe, they are ſeldom awakened to purpoſe.

BESIDES, your *zeal in this city* hath this ſingular advantage attending it, that it is likely to be influential upon the whole kingdom; for as all the blood in a man's body circulates through the heart, and is there invigorated, ſo moſt of the kingdom by turns have recourſe to their *metropolis*, where they, who are ſlack in this work, may by your zeal be

be provoked to an imitation, and they, who are, I fear, too ſecure from puniſhment in the country, may meet with it here, which may be to their good and amendment: So that upon all accounts you eſpecially are bound at this time to beſtir your ſelves. And I may beſpeak you, as *Hezekiah* did the *Levites* in a work of reformation too, *My ſons be not you now negligent, for you hath the Lord choſen to ſerve him*, 2 *Chron.* xxix. 11. SERM. XVII.

2. WE may juſtly fear, that prophaneneſs would be more rampant than ever after this little check given to it; I doubt we ſhould find, that the ſhort contradiction it hath found from the late laws will have had but the ſame effect, as St. *Paul* ſays, God's law once had upon him, that is, only to irritate their luſts, *Rom.* vii. So that they will not only be as the dog in returning to their vomit, but alſo as the dog let looſe, who is much the fiercer for having been chained: If once evil men burſt theſe bonds, and defeat theſe preſent attempts, who can but tremble to think, with what improved inſolence recovered wickedneſs will triumph and inſult, when once it knows the ſmalneſs of your ſtrength to oppoſe it? I may therefore allude to that of St. *Peter*, 2 *Epiſt.* *chap.*

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chap. ii. *ver.* 21. and ſay, It had been better for you never to have begun than now to decline, better not to have fought, than to give iniquity the advantage of a victory by an untimely retreat.

3. SUCH a declenſion of your zeal will betray an unſoundneſs in the principles, by which you have already been acted: You know ſome are apt to ſay your *zeal* is not *fire* kindled from heaven, but either from ſome *perſonal quarrel*, or an hypocritical *affectation* of *eſteem*, or at beſt but a childiſh fondneſs for a *novel* buſineſs, which laſts while it looks like a wonder, and then it becomes a wearineſs: now, ſhould you indeed deſiſt in your preſent circumſtances, it would encreaſe the preſumption. I hope that you are acted by the moſt noble ſprings, from an awful tenderneſs for the honour of God, grieved becauſe *men keep not his law*, *Pſ.* cxix. 136. and from a compaſſionate concern both for *ſinners* perſonal and the *nation's* common good, which you have the ſagacity to apprehend the approaching ruin of, if iniquity go uncontroll'd; but if theſe have been your reaſons, they will yet be of force with you: Is not the name of God and the public good as precious now as a few years ſince,

since, or have not such flagitious crimes the same hurtful influence and aspect upon both still? Oh, beware that you cast not a reproach upon all that you have done hitherto by a voluntary desertion of that cause, which lately you seemed so warm for; remember, that a right and just zeal hath this character, that it is *always*, and not only for a time, *Gal.* iv. 18. SERM. XVII.

4. THE unconquer'd obstinacy of wicked men will shame and reproach you. It was the glory of our Lord Jesus, that when he and the devil had such a stated conflict in the wilderness, the devil after many vain assaults retreated, and our Saviour kept the field as conqueror, *Mat.* iv. 11. But it will be your great reproach, if in the struggle of this day between the servants of these two chieftains, you that are on Christ's side should first faint and flee, especially when you have so much the advantage every way. The flagitious sinner hath God and his own conscience to contend with, as well as with you, he hath both future and present dangers to discourage him, so that upon the whole, it will be strange indeed, if he thinks his sins will bear his charges, or quit costs through disgrace and penalties here, and

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through the horrors of an endleſs night of darkneſs hereafter. But you have all things to encourage you, God and conſcience, the civil authority, and joyful proſpects of eternal rewards; ſo that greater is your aſſiſtance, greater your encouragement every way, greater is He that is in you, than he that is in them; and ſhall they hold out, and you languiſh? You have every way the advantage of them, except you ſhould want it in your own reſolution.

5. CONSIDER the great danger that will follow, if thro' your neglect the work of *reformation* ſhould not be accompliſh'd; What a train of calamities did *Eli*'s remiſneſs in puniſhing his vile ſons bring upon the *public* and *himſelf*, and on his poſterity after him? The enemy in God's habitation, the ark taken captive, and thirty thouſand of *Iſrael* ſlain, is the next news we hear concerning the public, *Ch.* iv. Then *Eli* himſelf dies the death of an unredeemed aſs, he breaks his neck with a fall, after that evil tydings had broken his heart, his two wicked ſons are ſlain in the battle, his daughter-in-law expires in her anguiſh and grief, and all his poſterity is left under the curſe and ſentence of rejection, which after the reigns of *Saul* and *David*,

was

was executed by *Solomon*, 2 *Kings* ii. 27. the vengeance of God follows him after death it ſelf in the generations to come; and all this for the *iniquity he knows of*, Ch. iii. 13. for that *emphatical*, that heavy ſin, of not puniſhing ſcandalous offenders. What an awful warning ſhould this be to magiſtrates and people, that they incur not the guilt of it! That they do not through negligence, or ſloth, or a fooliſh tenderneſs omit to vindicate the honour of God from the ſcorn of profligate ſinners! We might then hope to ſee ſhortly that univerſal reſtraint of ſuch, as ſhall be both the *ſafety* and *ornament* of our land; but if you and others, if magiſtrates or people have no heart to do ſo much for God, who knows how ſoon the glory may depart from us, and we be forced to write *I-Chabod* on all our comforts; when the weight of ſome *additional curſe* alſo may fall on them, who had ſpecial advantages for doing their duty, but did it not? Nay, yours after you may feel it, and the frowns of God be entail'd on your poſterity, ſo provoking a ſin is it not to riſe up for God againſt Evil-doers, when he ſounds an alarm to the conflict. SERM. XVII.

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NAY, let me tell you this further, that your own perſonal piety in other relations may be no ſecurity to you againſt temporal judgments; *Eli* had himſelf a mighty reverence for God, with what humble ſubmiſſion doth he adore the juſtice of his threatning. *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeems good in his ſight*, 1 *Sam.* iii. 18. His heart was ſet upon the ark of God; that word, *the ark of God is taken*, Ch. iv. 18. knock'd him down dead; yet for all this God's anger was not turned away, but his hand was ſtretched out ſtill.—No, far be it from me to let thee or thine continue in honour, on thee ſhall be all that contempt and ſhame, which thou ſhould'ſt have poured on thoſe lewd wretches, and becauſe thou haſt let them eſcape, thou ſhalt ſuffer.

6. BUT then, if on the other hand, you are ſincere in theſe endeavours, how ſweet and comfortable will the ſenſe of it be at death, and for ever. It is but a poor inch of time, we have, in which to do our God *ſuch ſervice* as this, in heaven are no conflicts between ſaints and ſinners; there is no warfare, all is triumph and peace, no trial of your courage and patient reſolution; it is in this preſent life, if ever, we muſt honour God in this kind;

kind; and ſure when you are going off the ſtage, conſcience will inquire what hath been done for God and his intereſt? And the more of ſelf-denial, the more pains, hazards, and diſcouragements you have gone through to ſerve his honour, the ſweeter will your reflections on it be, and with greater confidence will you hope and pray for his ſalvation. Of this you may ſee an inſtance upon record in *David*, *Pſal.* xxvi. 24. compared with *ver.* 9. *I have not ſat with vain perſons, I have hated the congregation of evil doers: O gather not thou my ſoul with ſinners*, &c. *q. d.* Thou Lord, who art the omniſcient witneſs, and ſhortly wilt be the final judge of all my ways, knoweſt that I never loved either the ways or the company of profane ſinners; I have always appeared againſt them, I have checked and diſcountenanced them; they have been a grief to me, and I have been an awe and reſtraint upon them; now therefore I pray, let not me, when I die, go with them, with whom I could not endure to live; we were never delightful aſſociates in this world, O never let me be their ſorrowful companion in the next; and how certain accompliſhment muſt ſuch requeſts, ſo reaſonable and ſo ſuitable

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have? You ſhall go, not to ſuch as you grieved at and abhorr'd, but to ſuch as you have loved, where none ſhall either offend God, or grieve you by their ſin and folly; where ſhall be no more reforming work to do, becauſe no more ſin or blemiſh; no more conflict, becauſe no enemies of God; no more danger or hazard in God's ſervice, becauſe none to oppoſe; where all difficulties and diſcouragements ſhall be left behind to poor mortals, that ſhall follow after you complaining and groaning through theſe *black tents of Kedar*, when you are free from the woes and vexations thereof.

AND then my brethren, then will come the crowns and thrones, the robes and palms of victory to adorn them, who have with greateſt zeal and labour ſtriven againſt ſin and Satan for God and holineſs: Oh, who would want theſe comfortable thoughts upon a dying bed! How much better is this, than to have conſcience chaſe thee out of this world into eternity with ſuch upbraiding clamours, as go thou ſlothful unprofitable ſervant, thou cumberer of the ground, thou deſpiſed veſſel, in which thy God had no pleaſure to make any uſe of!

BUT

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BUT then, that you may reflect thus comfortably upon your endeavours, you must be directed by such rules as these:

1. BEWARE that none of you be guilty of wounding the honour of God your selves, while you pretend to repair the injuries it receives from others; let no man think to compound for any indulged crimes of his own by being severe upon those of others; you have many observers, let it be your care to disappoint them that watch for your halting; the wicked *Chams* of the age will be glad to see the *Noahs*, the promoters of righteousness, drunk; remember that they who *reprove the works of darkness* must have no *fellowship with them*, Eph. v. 11. You will much more freely throw the first stone at others, when you are without such sins your selves.

2. SEE that God's honour be the end directly designed by you; go not along with others merely for company, when you think not why, that it may not be said of you, as of him, whom God ordained to be the rod of his anger to a sinful nation, that you indeed have done what greatly honours God, *howbeit, you mean it not so*, Isa. x. 7. An explicite vigorous intention to serve your Maker's

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ker's glory is an eſſential part of ſuch more immediate ſervice.

3. SHEW your ſelves ſatisfied with God's honour for your reward, being far from a proud affectation of human applauſe, or any nauſeous diſcovery of ſelf-eſteem. Would it not be a ſad exchange, if God ſhould ſay, you have your reward? To loſe the approbation and favour of heaven for the miſtaken good opinion of poor worms. Let then the moſt unaffected humility ſhew, that you love not the praiſe of men ſo much as the praiſe of God. Let no man have occaſion ſo to interpret your carriage, as if the language of it were like that of vain-glorious *Jehu*, *Come, ſee my zeal for the Lord.*

IT is then an happy caſe indeed, when a man's face ſhines, as *Moſes*'s, with the luſtre of eminent perfections, and himſelf knows it not, or at leaſt covers them with a veil of modeſty: While you endeavour to be as the lights of the world, be like the bright flaming taper, which at once caſts a ſplendid light before others, and yet an obſcure ſhade about it ſelf.

4. SEE that the methods you uſe in this work, be as ſuited to the honour of God, as the

the matter of your zeal is. I take this for granted, that you are acting in the ſafeſt cauſe in the world, you are not proſecuting any for differences of judgment in religion, or matters of conſcience; in ſuch a caſe, men's miſguided zeal oft makes thoſe woful miſtakes, ſpoken of by Chriſt, *John* xvi. 2. that I ſhould fear to wiſh you *God ſpeed*. But yours is the moſt unexceptionable cauſe, *viz.* To expoſe to puniſhment thoſe profane practices, which no conſcience was ever ſo perverſe, as ſeriouſly to eſpouſe: Who ever heard any cry out in bitter agonies, that they had not ſworn, nor committed whoredom, nor contemned the Lord's day more? SERM. XVII.

TAKE care, that your means be as warrantable for the diſcovery of ſuch offenders; you know it is ſpoken to God's honour, that he *tempts no man to evil*, *Jam.* i. 13. neither let any ſay, he was tempted of you: As I doubt not but you count it a wicked thing to provoke a man to paſſion in hopes that he will ſwear and curſe, ſo ſhould you in other caſes be afraid to lead any into temptation: It is not honourable to kindle thoſe impure flames, which you would quench, and which cannot burn the leaſt while without offence

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offence to God, nor is it ſafe to give poiſon in hopes of an antidote; beſides it may prove a dangerous temptation to your ſelves, and you may fall into the ſnare you laid for others, or at leaſt it may bring you under the reproach and ſuſpicion of an evil deſign, by ſuch as ſhall refuſe your bait, and ſo you may get a blot not eaſily to be wiped out.

5. LASTLY, Be greatly concerned, that you can honour God no more in this matter, eſpecially if your endeavours ſhould not in the main prove ſucceſsful: O grieve under it *for God's ſake*, that his great name muſt yet ſuffer contempt, his worſhip be deſpiſed, and his laws trampled under foot, and you cannot help it; *For the nation's ſake*, that when God would purge them, they would not be purged. Mourn over a people, that hate to be reformed, for whom what will remain but utter deſtruction, of which incorrigibleneſs in ſin is a deſperate omen? It is ſaid of theſe ſons of *Eli*, that they would not hearken to their father's reproof, *becauſe the Lord would deſtroy them*; And for your *own ſakes*, that God would not honour you with ſucceſs in ſo noble a ſervice.

BUT

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BUT to conclude, if on the other hand you do prevail, (as I would by no means deſpair of it,) then will it be God's glory to have his name held reverend, and his law made honourable: It will be the glory of *our land* to be called an habitation of holineſs; the glory of *our city*, that it is a faithful city, *full of judgment, in which righteouſneſs lodges*, *Iſa.* i. 21. yea, the glory of *our prince*, that in his days we were delivered, not only from popery and ſlavery, but from a terrible contagion of open profaneneſs, and that in his time righteouſneſs and peace kiſs each other.

AND it will be the glory of all you, who have been the active inſtruments of this, for having honoured God, he will honour you. And the ſhame ſhall be to none, but them, who deſerve no better, and for whom the moſt charitable prayer we can put up is that of *David*, *Fill thou their faces with ſhame, that they may ſeek thy name, O Lord*, *Pſal.* lxxxiii. 16.

SERMON

SERMON XVIII.

Funeral Conſolations.

BEING THE

FIRST SERMON

Preach'd by the AUTHOR after the Death of

His WIFE, Mrs. *Eſther Emlyn:*

Who Died *Octob.* 13. 1701. in the Thirtieth Year of her Age.

The PREFACE.

WHETHER that Grecian *law, which prohibited the neareſt kindred to make the panegyric upon the deceaſed, was reaſonable or not, I am not concerned to inquire; ſince it is not the deſign of the following diſcourſe to enlarge on the praiſe of the dead, but to ſpeak for the conſolation of the living.*

Indeed

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Indeed I am very apprehenſive, that I indulge my affection to the memory of the deceaſed, more than I conſult my own reputation, in publiſhing this plain diſcourſe; which was compoſed under the impreſſions of great ſorrow, yet ſuch, as could never pretend to boaſt of thoſe effects, which in the poet are aſcribed to the eloquent grief of Ulyſſes:

——— Dolor ipſe diſertum Fecerat.

Ovid.

Neverthleſs I muſt own, that I had probably done it ſooner, had I not been diverted by many troubles; the iſſue of which has been ſuch, as has not only given me more leiſure to review this ſermon, but alſo more occaſion often to retire to a ſerious contemplation of the matters therein contain'd.

What my ſufferings (for a principle of judgment) *have been, or for what cauſe I ſuffer* as an evil-doer, even unto bonds, *I intend not here to complain. It ſuffices me to leave my complaint with God, whom I deſire to ſerve according to my beſt underſtanding; and if I may but pleaſe him, the* judge *and* giver *of the* prize, *I ſhall be leſs anxious for the applauſe*

applauſe of ſpectators, *who muſt themſelves be judged alſo.* SERM. XVIII.

But as to that diſpenſation of providence, which occaſioned this diſcourſe; I do therein, with great reverence and ſatisfaction adore the righteous wiſdom of the ſupreme Lord of life and death, by whoſe appointment, according to the prophet's obſervation, Iſa. lvii. 1. righteous and merciful men are taken away from the evil to come. *For conſidering what was in the womb of providence, and ſo near to its birth, I cannot but reckon it an apparent deſign of mercy to her, who is deceaſed, that ſhe ſhould be carried into the quiet harbour, before ſo furious a tempeſt did ariſe, which might have made too cruel impreſſions on a diſpoſition ſo very gentle and tender: But ſhe was gathered into her grave in peace, that ſhe might not behold it. Moreover by ſuch a rebuke, ſo adapted to ſtrike at the root of all earthly love and delight, the all-wiſe God might greatly prepare him, who was to ſurvive, for better enduring his approaching trials; ſince thereby, neither the proſperity nor adverſity of this world could be any great temptation to one, who had leſs reaſon than ever to be fond of this life; and ſo loud an admonition never to ſeek*

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I believe there are but few Chriſtians, whoſe mountain ſtands ſo ſtrong, *or whoſe preſent proſperity is ſo undiſturbed, that they do not ſometimes feel it needful to turn their eyes towards heaven for ſupport, and to uſe their faith and hope, as the only remaining ſprings of ſure conſolation; and happy are they, who can ſo rejoice! Who in the midſt of ſtorms and clouds below can behold a calm and ſerene heaven over their heads, and by faith penetrate into a cloudleſs horizon above, when all underneath is darkneſs and horror. Who* look on the right hand and refuge fails, no man cares for them; *but yet can add,* O Lord, thou art my portion and refuge, *Pſ.* cxlii. 5.

And tho' there may be other motives more weighty, yet hardly any thing that more ſenſibly and eaſily entices our thoughts into the inviſible world, than this conſideration, that ſo many of our valuable friends are withdrawn within the veil: We do at leaſt imagine, that we thereby maintain ſome farther converſe with them: And indeed, if (as ſome ſay) our ſouls be only Thought, *then we have a way to*

be

be ſtill with them, as oft as by intenſe contemplation we can raiſe and wind our ſouls into that heavenly ſociety, into which they are incorporate. This is a ſort of ſilent and profitable converſe, which none can confine us from; and tho' it may ſeem but imaginary, yet it is of real influence, and very preparative to a more intimate and ſenſible ſociety with them hereafter. SERM. XVIII.

This will naturally lead us to converſe with God, to whom their ſpirits are returned, and to whom they are ſo nearly united; which was the ſolacing entertainment of our Lord Jeſus *in his forſaken ſtate, and becauſe of which he accounted himſelf to be not alone. And ſuch was the ſenſe an excellent heathen had of this great privilege, that he nobly triumphs over the fears of a ſuppoſed baniſhment from this conſideration, that in any country he ſhou'd be able to converſe with God.* Quocunque abiero, ibi erit Sol, ibi Luna, &c. ibi colloquia cum Deo *. *Such converſe with God and his ſaints tends greatly to inflame our deſires after heaven: One can ſcarcely be on the Mount with ſuch company, and not ſay, 'Tis good to be here, or rather to be nearer to them.*

* Arr. Epict. l. 3. c. 22. ἢ ϖ, ὁ; θεὼς ὁμιλία.

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And since we apply our minds to these things with a better relish, when earthly conversation is least tempting, we have great reason to esteem it a merciful stratagem of infinite wisdom, when by disturbing the ease of this present life he endears to us the hopes of the future, and reconciles us to death as the way to it: for as prosperity makes life, so adversity makes death more easy, which perhaps is an equal or greater kindness; I am sure it is so, if it makes us die more preparedly into that world, where we hope for better usage.

Indeed it is most fit, that so liberal a rewarder, as the great God will be, should appoint us to what trials he pleases; and the temper most worthy to be aspired after by a christian is so to cherish his vigorous desires of heaven, as not to become impatient of the business or conflicts of the present life, by which he may any way serve his master's honour; and in so doing, it is a pleasure to consider, that the sharper his trials are, the brighter shall the glory be that will reward him; and also, that he is following them, who by faith and patience are gone to inherit the promises: *With whom he hopes to be joined again, not as companions in tribulation and patience,*

patience, but in the delights of endleſs praiſe, and joyful love.

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Let me only deſire the reader ſeriouſly to improve Job's *queſtion,* Man gives up the ghoſt, and where is he? *Job.* xiv. 20. *What is betome of him whom we lately ſaw? Whither are they got ere this, who left our world a few days ſince? To what manſions? What work? What company? What have they ſeen? What have they felt? O amazing turn, that will ſoon be our own! When others will ask theſe queſtions of us, which will be ſeriouſly anſwered upon ourſelves. O moment of all moments! moſt deſirable! and yet moſt terrible! How ſurely wilt thou ſoon ſhut the door of time upon us all, and put us to ſhift, as we can, for eternity! eternity!*

Felices animæ! quibus eſt fortuna peracta.

JOHN xiv. 28.

If ye loved me ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid I go to the Father: For my Father is greater *than I.*

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I PRESUME 'tis unknown to very few of this aſſembly, under what mournful circumſtances I now appear in this place; or what that ſorrowful occaſion is, which in the choice of theſe words I have regard to, and which (by a due conſideration of them) I deſire to be relieved under.

THE words are a very proper lenitive for aſſuaging the immoderate ſorrow of Chriſtians upon the death of their lamented pious friends; a time when nature melts into tears, overwhelmed with a ſwelling tide of grief, which is hardly kept within the bounds either of reaſon or of grace. Alas! when our withering gourds are ſmitten of God, eſpecially if with a ſudden and early ſtroke, we are ready to think with *Jonah*, *We do well to be angry*, or to fret and pine: On this grievous occaſion we hear

hear little elſe but the voice in *Ramah*, *Lamentation and weeping*, Rachel *weeping for her children* (or friends) *and refuſing to be comforted, becauſe they are not.* So that it muſt be a very powerful argument indeed that can charm the tumultuous ſpirit of a deep mourner into a calm moderation of his anguiſh. SERM. XVIII.

AND if there be any argument in the world ſufficient in the caſe, no doubt but our Saviour has choſen it here, who urges his diſciples with a mighty diſſuaſive from too much grief; and this taken from that which was the very root and ſpring of it, *viz.* their unfeigned love to him.

THE caſe was in ſhort this; Our Lord *Jeſus* was now about to die, and was taking his farewel of his diſciples; *Yet*, ſays he, *a little while and ye ſhall not ſee me*; and again, *Whither I go ye cannot come*, John xiii. 33. Upon theſe melancholy tidings, their hearts were ſore troubled: no wonder if they were loth to part with ſo kind a friend, or to loſe ſo dear a maſter; ſuch a wiſe guide and profitable teacher; eſpecially ſince they were like to be left in a very forlorn caſe, as a poor naked prey to the rage and hatred of a blind and malicious generation. They ſeemed con-

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tent to die along with him, if that might be, *Why cannot I follow thee? I will lay down my life for thee*, John xiii. 37. was the language of one and all of them; but they could not bear the thoughts of a diſconſolate ſeparation.

OUR Lord ſeeing them thus dejected endeavours to cheer and hearten them. *Let not your hearts be troubled*, Joh. xiv. 1. or don't take on and grieve ſo, but hearken to what I have to ſay for your conſolation: And then he applies ſeveral arguments to this purpoſe, *viz.* from his deſign in going to *prepare a place*, where he and they might for ever live together; *I go to prepare a place for you; I will come again, and receive you to my ſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo*, *Joh.* xiv. 3. A reviving conſideration! that they ſhould one day meet their dear friend again, and that their ſeparation was to be but for a while. Well, but for all this, death makes ſuch a vaſt diſtance between friends, and we know ſo little of another ſtate, that the diſciples ſeemed to doubt, whether ever they ſhould meet again, if once they parted: They knew not whither he was going, nor the way to follow him: Thomas *ſaith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goeſt, and how can*

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we know the way? ver. 5. In anſwer to this *Chriſt* tells them, he was the *way, the truth, and the life*; *i. e.* that the ſure way to follow him to heaven, was by a due obſervance of his doctrine and precepts, as being the embaſſador and repreſentative of God to men to deliver his mind on earth: For this he deſires their belief, at leaſt, if they would not take *his word*, they might be ſatisfied from *his works*, which ſhewed the *Father* did dwell in him, *ver.* 11. Then he argues from the great advantage they would reap by his removing to heaven, to intercede for them, and to ſend down the *Holy Spirit* upon them. SERM. XVIII.

BUT leſt all this ſhould not quiet them, he has one argument more in reſerve in theſe words of my text, and that the moſt moving that can be; in which he deſires them, if they loved him, that they would not ſo much mourn as rejoice at his departure; intimating that he would take it for a proof of their love to him, if they would mourn leſs. They thought doubtleſs, they ſhewed love to him in grieving for his death; and it may ſeem ſtrange, that Chriſt ſhould put ſuch a contrary interpretation upon their friendly ſor-

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row, or ſhould require ſo unnatural a thing of them, as to rejoice for his departure: What, (might they think) ſhall we rejoice at ſo amiable a friend's removal from us? Or can we be glad that we ſhall ſee his face here no more? No, 'tis impoſſible; we have no heart, no diſpoſition to be glad in this ſad ſeaſon: therefore he adds a reaſon to back this great paradox, *viz.* becauſe he was *going to the Father*; that is, to be rewarded and glorified by *him who was* greater *than himſelf*, and ſo was able to exalt him; which could not be without leaving them: Therefore ſays he, *If ye love me, ye ſhould rejoice, becauſe* I told you *I was going to the Father.* Hence I lay down this propoſition:

That true love to our departed pious friends, ſhould prompt us to rejoice at their tranſlation hence to heaven.

I KNOW indeed there were peculiar reaſons why the diſciples ſhould rejoice at Chriſt's departure to the Father, *viz.* becauſe by it he ſhould do them more beneficial ſervice, than by his ſtay. *It is expedient*, ſays he, *that I go away: For if I go not, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you*, Joh. xvi. 7. But theſe are not the

the motives our Lord Jeſus argues from in the text; this were to argue from their own intereſt, or love to themſelves; whereas he argues here from their pure love to him; ſuppoſing themſelves were to receive no advantage, but preſent loſs by his death, yet for his ſake they ſhould rejoice at his happineſs in going to the *Father*. So that it is an argument as truly applicable to the caſe of any other holy friend's departure, when on our part there is real love and affection to them, as the ſpring; and on their part it can be ſaid truly, That they go to the Father, as the ground and matter of this joy. SERM. XVIII.

IN ſpeaking to this point, I ſhall *Firſt*, Shew the meaning of our Saviour's words. *Secondly*, The force of his argument.

I. I ſhall conſider the meaning of our Saviour in theſe words, both negatively, and poſitively.

1. *Negatively*; (1.) It was not Chriſt's meaning, by theſe words, to ſay, that there was no real love at the bottom of his diſciples great ſorrow for his death; or that there was no true love, where there was not viſible joy on this occaſion. That would have been an hard interpretation indeed of their friendly

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friendly grief: They knew it was from love that their grief ſprang; that if they had not loved much, they had ſorrowed leſs: they were ready to make the appeal to him, *Thou knoweſt that we love thee.* Indeed he ſaw ſo much love in their ſorrow, that it made him argue thus with them; *If*, or ſeeing *ye love me*, &c. *q. d.* I ſee you love me, and are expreſſing your tender affection to me by your mournful countenance and words, which ſhew your regret at my departure; ſince then love ſo prevails and works, let me argue with you from that prevailing paſſion without extinguiſhing or diſcouraging it; let me direct it into a right courſe, and then that love, which now makes you grieve, ſhall much more make you to rejoice. He does not queſtion, but ſuppoſes their love in theſe words.

IN like manner, neither muſt it be ſaid, that there is no love to our departed friends, whoſe deceaſe we lament with a flood of tears: 'tis paſt the power of any man in the world to convince us of that; for we feel our love as plainly as we do our grief: And indeed our grief is nothing but our diſappointed unſatisfied love; nay, it was from our Lord's own weeping over dead *Lazarus*, that

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it was ſaid, *Behold how he loved him!* John xi. 36. 'Tis love makes us feel the pain of an heart-rending ſeparation between us and an amiable friend: 'Tis love makes us miſs the wonted deſire of our eyes, its once ſo pleaſant object: Why elſe do men weep chiefly for relations and friends whom they love, if love do not influence grief? SERM. XVIII.

(2.) NOR does our Lord intend to intimate, that all ſuch ſorrow for our holy friends departure is an unlawful or unbecoming expreſſion of our love. Doubtleſs he was not diſpleaſed to ſee his diſciples tenderly affected with his removal, and that he was like to die lamented of ſome. He, who ſhed tears at *Lazarus*'s grave with ſighs and deep groans, cannot be thought to forbid them wholly at his own: therefore he does not chide his diſciples with angry reproaches, as tho' they were wholly in the wrong, but ſoftly and tenderly reaſons the matter with them in gentle perſuaſions, *Let not your hearts be troubled*; as rather pitying their ſorrow, than altogether condemning it. He who knows our frame will indulge the weakneſs of our frail natures a little in this thing, and will allow

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low us to pay a ſmall tribute of tears to the precious memory of an endeared friend; and to utter our parting farewel with an unuſual accent of ſorrow. Why ſhould we not weep, when we are ſure we ſhall ſee their faces no more? ſince for that very reaſon the Chriſtians of *Aſia* wept ſore at St. *Paul*'s leaving them; and they of *Cæſarea* on the proſpect of his dying, (tho' ſomewhat remote,) did weep, both to the breaking of their own hearts and his alſo, *Acts* xxi. 13. Indeed that ſame Apoſtle, who ſeems to ſpeak moſt againſt ſorrow for the death of Chriſtian friends, aims not at more than to make ſome abatement of the uſual exceſſes of grief among the Pagans. *Sorrow not as others, that have no hope*, 1 *Theſ.* iv. 13. How that was we may learn in *Deut.* xiv. 12. it was with violent rage, like madmen, under the tyranny of a paſſion, to whoſe exceſſes they abandoned themſelves without check.

ESPECIALLY where the relation is neareſt, (I mean the conjugal) and the ſeparation moſt violent, there God will permit us to ſhew the deeper reſentment, becauſe he allows greater affection. He that requires ſuch love to the *wife of our boſom*, eſpecially when the

the *wife of our youth* too, as to bid us, *Rejoice with the wife of thy youth, let her be as the loving hind, and pleaſant roe; be thou raviſhed with her love always*, Prov. v. 18. Again, *Huſbands love your wives, even as Chriſt loved his church*, Eph. v. 25. And again, *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies*, ver. 28. He, I ſay, knows well that ſo much love cannot (according to the make of human nature) but end in great grief at the diſſolution of that near relation.

AND tho' the antient patriarchs were men very renown'd for their mortification to the comforts of this world, being truly pilgrims on the earth, yet methinks, I find holy *Jacob* expreſſing ſuch a ſenſible ſorrow for the death of his *Rachel* many years after, as ſhews that wound was not yet quite healed to his dying day: *As for me*, ſays he, *when I came from* Padan-aram, Rachel *died by me in the land of* Canaan *by the way, when yet there was but a little way to* Ephrath, *and I buried her there*, Gen. xlviii. 7. He bemoans himſelf under the ſenſe of his loſs, *as for me*, or that which ſticks by me, in a very ſenſible remembrance ſtill; that which I am greatly concerned at, and cannot forget, &c. *as for me*, or as to my ſorrowful part,

Rachel

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Rachel died by me; and there I buried my greateſt earthly delight. It is no unuſual thing with good men, to lament under ſuch circumſtances: *Ezekiel*'s caſe was particular, he was forbid to mourn for his wife on purpoſe to amaze the people with his ſtrange carriage, that they might aſk the meaning of ſo monſtrous and unuſual a thing, as not to mourn for the taking away the deſire of his eyes, *Ezek.* xxiv. 16, 21, 22. and it was to repreſent the greatneſs of their approaching calamity, that would be ſo great as to ſwallow up all private occaſions of grief.

MORE eſpecially may it quicken our ſorrow, when we apprehend ſuch a ſtroke to be the puniſhment of our iniquities, which withhold and withdraw good things from us; when we have reaſon to put that interpretation upon God's hand in the death of our dear relations, which ſhe did on the death of her child, that it was *to bring our ſins to remembrance*, 1 *Kings* xvii. 18. in this caſe grace falls in with nature, and by uniting their two ſtreams the torrent of grief becomes the more violent: for who can look upon his dear friend, whom he has pierced and ſlain, and not mourn bitterly? But,

2. *Poſitively*, That which Chriſt intends here, is, SERM. XVIII.

(1.) THAT at leaſt his diſciples ſhould mix ſome joy with their ſorrow for his death; he does not ſay, *If ye loved me*, ye would not grieve, but, *ye would rejoice*; there ſhould be ſome joy to allay and moderate their ſorrow. And indeed as theſe two eaſily conſiſt in the ſame breaſt, ſo there is a proper occaſion for this mixture and confuſion of our paſſions in the death of our pious friends; becauſe in ſuch diſpenſations, there is both a bright and cloudy ſide, the one in their gain, the other in our great loſs; *ſo that in the multitude of our troubled thoughts within us, there are comforts that may delight our ſouls*, *Pſ.* xciv. 19. and with *David*, we ſhould have our hearts tuned to *ſing of mercy and judgment* at once, *Pſ.* ci. 1.

(2.) HE intends to intimate, that their rejoicing ſhould be more than their ſorrow upon this occaſion: for tho' he ſpeaks not *excluſively*, in requiring them to rejoice, yet he ſpeaks *comparatively* at leaſt, that they ſhould rather rejoice than mourn; joy ſhould be our principal exerciſe, ſo that if it be inquired what our frame and carriage is under

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under ſuch a providence, it may be ſaid we rather rejoice and triumph, than are dejected. True indeed, an external wanton mirth in jollity and laughter would be a monſtrous deformity; but rational joy and ſatisfaction is a comely chriſtian temper, that well comports with the gravity of ſuch an occaſion.

3. HE ſuggeſts further, that to rejoice on ſuch occaſions is the moſt regular and noble exerciſe of love to ſuch departed friends; 'tis the moſt genuine and regular exerciſe of love, ſince the nature of love is to incline us to a joyful congratulation of the proſperity of its indeared object: and 'tis then it carries moſt evidences of a love unfeign'd, when we rejoice in our friends welfare, tho' no benefit (but rather damage) redounds to us thereby.

TO ſay the truth, inordinate grief for the tranſlation of a friend to heaven is no proof at all of any love we bear to them, becauſe 'tis not their caſe affects us, but our own: ſo that all which can be ſaid of us in juſtice is, that we love ourſelves very well, whatever we do our friends; yea, much better than we love them, ſince our own leſſer loſs cauſes a trouble, which the thoughts of their much greater

greater gain cannot ballance; ſo that we are liable to that reproachful challenge, *Is this thy kindneſs to thy friend?* Our cheerful ſatisfaction will better declare that. SERM. XVIII.

AND it is far the moſt *noble*, as well as moſt genuine exerciſe of love; it is a poor ordinary frame to mourn for our dead, as ariſing from mere ſenſitive nature: One needs no improvement of mind in order to this; there needs neither philoſophy nor chriſtianity, virtue nor religion, to teach us this low leſſon; but to rejoice in their happy change, to be glad that they are laid in a bed of everlaſting reſt, whilſt we ſuffer the loſs of their pleaſant ſociety, this is generous and truly noble love; this is ſuch an ingenuous greatneſs of mind, as is only the product of divine faith and chriſtian hope, which regulates our love, and raiſes it to ſo high a pitch, as nothing below the grace of God and the light of the goſpel can advance it to. *So much for the explication.*

II. I COME next, under the ſecond general, to ſhew the force of our Saviour's reaſon, by which he juſtifies his inference, *viz.* that if they loved him, they would rejoice. Now the reaſon, on which he grounds this, is

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in theſe words, *Becauſe I go to the father, who is* greater *than I*; i. e. to one who could, and would exalt and reward him: *q. d.* I am going to be happy and glorious, to a bleſſed place, and bleſſed company, where I ſhall have no need of your pity or ſorrow, and therefore on this conſideration you ſhould greatly abate it.

Now allowing for the difference in the glorious rewards and exaltation of our maſter, and of his ſervants, the reaſon may be extended to others, and has its force in the death of any pious friends; for they alſo *go to the Father*: the ſpirit *goes to God who gave it*, not only as the ſpirit of the wicked, *viz.* to be diſpoſed of by him; but the holy chriſtian's ſpirit goes to him, as to his liberal rewarder, to ſee him, and enjoy him, to dwell and converſe with him in that bleſſed acquaintance, which ſhall never be broken off to eternity; for they go to the ſame place with their Saviour, *where I am, there ſhall ye alſo be*, and ſhall have a manſion in the ſame Father's houſe, *Joh.* xiv. 3.

Now let us conſider what there is implied in all this, that ſhould raiſe joy upon the departure of our holy friends in all that rightly love

love them. Now there are three arguments or grounds of joy which ariſe hence. SERM. XVIII.

1. This implies that our pious and dear friends, tho' dead, are not utterly extinct and loſt; for they only *go to the Father*: they paſs from one place and company to another, but are not ſunk into the black abyſs of non-exiſtence. It was but a ſlender conſolation, which the Heathen philoſophers oft offered to their mourners, in telling them, that tho' dead men enjoy no good, yet neither do they feel any evil. Indeed, ſuppoſing them loſt in an utter extinction, 'tis all the comfort we have left concerning the beſt men; whereas we can only allow that to be true of the body; this having loſt the active animating principle, is neither miſerable nor happy; now like an uſeleſs idol, it has eyes but cannot ſee, ears but cannot hear, and feet but cannot walk; it has loſt its beautiful air and regular motions, and all its ſenſations of pleaſure and pain. But we believe better than ſo of the inviſible principle, that this has ſtill the pleaſure of life and activity about nobler objects: that immortal tenant is only removed from a crazy cottage of clay to a more excellent dwelling *not made with hands*.

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This indeed is better tidings than what ſenſe reports; that repreſents them as loſt for ever, but faith tells us, they are but tranſlated: *the one* ſays, *Joſeph* is utterly devoured by an evil beaſt, and now is not; by *the other* we underſtand he is ſafe and well in another land. This is ſo mighty a lenitive to our grief, (which we owe chiefly to the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt,) that the Apoſtle ſticks not to ſay, that *he has even aboliſhed death* by making this diſcovery of a future life, 2 *Tim.* i. 10. Here then is matter of joy to think that our friends are not periſhed in the frightful ſhipwreck; but as we have ſometimes ſeen the ſame boiſterous waves, that break the veſſel, do but waft the paſſenger over to the ſafe ſhore, ſo death has landed them ſafe on another coaſt, whoſe frail bodily veſſel is daſh'd in pieces. No wonder if *Rachel* refuſe to be comforted, if ſhe think her dead children are not in being; but bleſſed be God, it is not ſo, for all, even the dead live to God, tho' not with us; they live, yea and they act, and think, and love more buſily than ever, *Luke* xx. 38.

IT is with them as with the ſun, who at evening leaves our horizon under diſconſolate darkneſs; and ſome very fooliſh perſons may think

think its glory buried and extinguiſhed, when it is only gone to the other hemiſphere, and there ſhines with as much beauty and brightneſs as ever. Methinks this conſideration ſhould make us ſay as old *Jacob*, when on good tidings of *Joſeph*'s welfare he began to revive, *It is enough, he* (or ſhe) *is alive*; Gen. xlv. 28. It is enough to put us into a tranſport of joy, to read what our bleſſed Lord ſaid for the ſupport of *Martha*, when grieved for her brother *Lazarus*'s death, *I am the reſurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die*, John xi. 25, 26. Well then, we learn from our Saviour's argument here, that the ſurviving Chriſtian has this to ſay for his comfort, that his dead friends are not raſed out of being; they have ſhot the gulph, but are not loſt in it. Be not then terrified at their death; it has kill'd the body, but could not kill the ſoul. SERM. XVIII.

2. This conſideration that they *are gone to the Father* implies, that they are unſpeakably more happy, where they *now* are, than they were, or would have been, if they had continued *here*. This Chriſt plainly intends in the words, *viz.* that he

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(1.) THEY are hereby delivered from our (and once their) troubles. They, who paſs out of our *Egypt*, do certainly go out of a place of great bondage, and ſhake off a mighty load of cares and fears, and many uneaſy burdens, which being in this tabernacle they groaned under. The occaſions of grief here are ſo many, either originally, or by ſympathy our own, that of moſt who are departen hence may that account be given, *Theſe are they, who came out of great tribulation*: they are gone off from an accurſed earth, doom'd to bear briers and thorns to the torment of man. Their life was but a tragedy fill'd with ſighs and groans, not counterfeit but real; how many provocations to grief or anger fill'd their eyes with tears, and their mouths with complaints? One while crying with the *Shunamite*'s child, *My head! my head!* and anon with the Prophet, *O my bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my very heart*, Jer. iv. 19.

BUT now there are no thorns in the fleſh to diſquiet them; they are no longer haraſs'd with

with painful diſeaſes or feeble ſickneſs, with faintings or wearineſs, or with ungrateful remedies, that could neither prevent the frequent alarms, nor the one fatal ſtroke of death. Nay, 'tis a great part of their deliverance, that they have now no frightful views of approaching dreadful death; the king of terrors, with his train of black attendants, will return to them no more; they are got out of his dominion, they have felt his ſting, they have ſhot the amazing gulph, have no more dying groans and ſobs to fetch, nor parting agonies to fear, which terrify us mortals, who have that conflict yet to go through. Theſe melancholy things with them are over and paſt; now the weary body is at reſt in its bed; the grave is a quiet ſleeping place, where all is huſh and ſtill, peace and ſilence; *the clods of that valley are ſweet unto them*, Job. xxi. 33. There they have found a quiet harbour, where they have unladen all their burdens and ſorrows; there they have buried their cares and anxieties; there they have lodged an aching head, or tortured bowels, or pained limbs; that was the goal, at which their weariſome race and pilgrimage had its happy end. SERM. XVIII.

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NOR are they liable now to thoſe ſpiritual ſorrows, which once diſquieted their tender ſouls; they have no doubts of the love of God, for they know and feel it abundantly; no more an aching heart about their eternal condition, ſaying, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* for they have heard, *Well done good and faithful ſervant, enter into thy Maſter's joy.* They have no more deſpondent ſuſpicion of their own ſincerity towards God, no lamented indiſpoſitions to his holy ſervice, no ſpots nor wrinkles to render them a ſhame or burden to themſelves; they fetch no more ſuch deep ſighs as that, *Oh wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* Rom. vii. 24. They have no more ſuch bitter challenges as thoſe, *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul? and why ſo diſquieted within me?* Pſal. xlii. 11. They are ſatisfied with God's likeneſs.

THEY ſee no abominations in that holy land, to cauſe them to ſigh and mourn; the evil ſerpent enters not their paradiſe, to tempt any to ſin: their righteous ſouls are not vexed with ſeeing or hearing any filthy or miſerable thing: no groans of the oppreſſed, nor cries of the perſecuted; no tragical relations from

from our *Aceldama*; no reports of this great ſlaughter, and that mighty deſolation, which make up the hiſtory of this earth, and gain the applauſes of the theatre; no ſuch doleful tidings, nor mournful ſpectacles diſturb their quiet felicity. SERM. XVIII.

MUCH leſs are they grieved for thoſe conſequences of their death, that now trouble us; it grieves not them that they have quitted our world or company; they are not ſorry they have left their worldly poſſeſſions and eſtates, that the pleaſant places of their habitation muſt know 'em no more; it wounds not them, that they have left their once deareſt friends in mournful ſorrow, crying after them, *My Father! My Father!* 2 *Kings* ii. 12. It troubles not them, that their once ſo beloved offspring are become expoſed orphans in the world; no, as *their ſons may come to honour, and they know it not; ſo may they be brought low, and they perceive it not*, Job xiv. 21. They mind not theſe petty troubles of ours; it grieves not them, (however it may us) that their comely countenance is turn'd to ghaſtlineſs and deformity, and their fleſh become an habitation of worms, that once had a more noble inhabitant; they are not moved at lying

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in the dark and ſolitary vault among the dead, nor at the gnawing of thoſe worms that will die. We mention theſe things, or ruminate upon them with melancholy thoughts, but ſo do not they.

NOR have they any other ſorrows in exchange for theſe of the lower world; no, they have no more any pain, or ſorrow, or crying; *they ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more,* &c. Rev. xxi. 4. *For the lamb ſhall feed them, and lead them to the fountain of living waters; and God ſhall wipe all tears from their eyes,* chap. vii. 16, 17. In a word, 'tis their jubilee, 'tis the year of their eternal releaſe from all evil, in which they have not only caſt off their bonds and fetters, but have alſo put off their armour; have laid by the *ſhield of faith* and *helmet of hope,* and are ſat down in everlaſting perfect peace, in the *land of praiſe and joy,* into which they have carried no diſcordant complaints. Is not this a great motive to our joy, when they are gone? Why ſhould we grieve much for them, who grieve not at all themſelves? Or why ſhould rivers of tears run down our eyes, when God has wiped away all tears from theirs for ever?

(2.)

(2.) By *going to the Father* they enter into exceeding great joy; they have not only left *Egypt*, but they have got into the good land of promiſe: they have not indeed all the felicity intended for them; there are ſome ornaments and glories, which they muſt not put on nor wear till the *marriage-day of the lamb*; but yet the lines are fallen to them in pleaſant places, and they have already *a goodly heritage*; enough to warrant us to ſay, that *henceforth they are bleſſed*, becauſe ſome reward of their works has followed them at preſent, *Rev.* xiv. 13. They are got into their father's houſe, to their beſt and deareſt friend; he, who at their penitent return to him, (when they ſaid, *I will go to my father*, &c. *Luke* xv.) was ſo ready to meet them with compaſſionate embraces, to call for *the ring and fatted calf*, and to aſſure them of his gracious acceptance on earth, has doubtleſs with inexpreſſible kindneſs welcom'd them to their everlaſting home. He who before gave them the earneſt, has now given part of the inheritance; in his good pleaſure he has given them the kingdom; their maſter has bid them *enter into his joy*, and they have put SERM. XVIII.

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put on the *garments of praiſe, for the ſpirit of heavineſs.*

THEY are gone to a bleſſed place, to a paradiſe of eternal delights; are got nearer to the heaven of heavens, the royal palace of the king of glory, where the high and lofty ONE dwells in inacceſſible light, and fills that temple with his magnificent train; where he has erected a throne, on which infinite majeſty for ever reſides, at whoſe dazling brightneſs the ſeraphim hide their faces, and pay their homage with the greateſt veneration; where infinite beauty unveils its face to open view, where it amazes, raviſhes, and overcomes myriads of attentive ſpectators; its attractive charms draw and faſten all their eyes ſo, that they never look off from that *amiable object, they always behold him*, Mat. xviii. 10. where they need no books of devotion to warm their hearts; one view of his ineffable glory is inſtead of a thouſand arguments, and wraps them up in the flames of ardent admiring love.

THEY are gone to bleſſed company, where all are moſt holy, moſt wiſe, good and happy; a ſociety made up of the choiceſt and moſt excellent of the earth, whom God has been

been gathering together out of all the generations paſt, and has made much more excellent than they were; all of them kings and prieſts, and ſons of God; all knit together in the indiſſoluble bands of trueſt love, which is ever cheriſh'd by the engaging charms of intimate endearing converſe; ſo that they are dearer to each other, than ever our friends were to us, or we to them on earth. Oh! what a ſurprizing change is this to them, who from a world made deſolate by prevailing rage and malignity find themſelves got into the very element of love! How then can it be but well with them! for they are gone to *Mount Sion, the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jeruſalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, to God the judge of all, to the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect, and* Jeſus *the mediator of the new covenant*, Heb. xii. 22, 23. They are with the Redeemer in his kingdom, and in a noble conſort of ſpirits ſing the ſong of *Moſes* and the Lamb, *Hallelujah, ſalvation and glory to our God.* They, bleſſed ſouls, have all their wants ſupplied, all their needful deſires ſatisfied, and their hopes fulfill'd or well ſecured! They

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THEY are gone to a ſtate of *perfect knowledge and unſtain'd purity:* they are in a near conjunction with *the Father of lights*, that *eternal fountain* of all truth; from him their elevated underſtandings receive thoſe vigorous rays of divine wiſdom, which do both beautify and refreſh; the greateſt philoſophers, who have made the moſt ſucceſsful eſſays upon all the theories of nature, nay, *Solomon* himſelf, who had wiſdom enough to reach from the *cedar in* Lebanon *to the hyſſop on the wall, in all the glory* of his wiſdom was not like to one of theſe; he that is leaſt in that kingdom above, is greater than he; there they are, truly, as wiſe as the angels of God; all their imperfect partial knowledge is done away, becauſe *that which is perfect is come.* They have found the way out of thoſe labyrinths, in which we are maz'd and loſt; and ſound their joyful εὑρηκα over a thouſand doubts and difficulties, which after all our laborious diſ-

quiſitions,

quiſitions, do poſe and confound us mortals: they have found the happy way of increaſing knowledge without increaſing ſorrow. How many doubts are with them reſolv'd! how many miſtakes corrected! how many unknown ſecrets revealed! O glorious and ample proſpect, that from the mount *Moriah*, the mount of viſion, has open'd itſelf to their clear and ſatisfying view! Truly their light is ſweet, and it is a pleaſant thing to behold it. SERM. XVIII.

No leſs is the pleaſure of their perfect holineſs, or the exerciſe of their conſummate love. There is even now a very ſweet reliſh in the exerciſes of a devout mind, while with *David* he is but *panting after God, as the hart after the water-brooks*; the ſoul feels an hidden pleaſure in that divine warmth; it is marrow and fatneſs to it, and renders a day in God's courts *better than a thouſand*: but it is a much more noble thing to love as thoſe bleſſed do, who enjoy and ſee the God of love, and claſp about that infinite eternal good with the brighteſt flames of ardent unwearied zeal. How delightful is it to exerciſe that love in high admirations, and to give it vent in the tranſports of endleſs praiſes! How pleaſant to ſerve ſo endeared an object, with a mind cured of

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all its infirmities, and diſentangled from all impediments! And above all, how ſatisfying to behold in themſelves ſo lively a conformity to him, whoſe matchleſs excellencies have ſo many myriads of delightful admirers!

AND is not here great reaſon why we ſhould rejoice for them? does not love teach us to be glad at our friend's felicity? Oh, my brethren, can we indeed with ſerioufneſs contemplate the heavenly glory of the ſaints, ſo amazing, ſo unſpeakable glory, and not be tranſported to think and hope, that our beloved dear friends are there? Sure, if with St. *Paul* we had ever been taken up into the third heaven, and had heard his Ἄρρητα ῥήματα, things not to be utter'd; or if, with St. *John*, we had in viſion ſurvey'd the *New Jeruſalem* in all its glory, and heard the charming melody of the hallelujahs ſung in her ſtreets; or had ever beheld triumphant ſaints walking in white robes with palms in their hands; I ſay, ſure we ſhould be aſhamed to weep for them who are there. Look up, Chriſtians, and ſee if theſe be objects of lamentation. What! they that have a paradiſe to dwell in, that have a kingdom to enrich them, that have angels to converſe with, and an infinite God to enjoy!

joy! are theſe to be condoled? No, no, the more we loved them, the more we ſhall rejoice, becauſe it is ſo very well with them. Would we indeed recal them from all this bliſs and joy unto a partnerſhip of our tears and groans, our ſins and darkneſs? What! from the poſſeſſion of all thoſe great things, beyond what our *eye ever ſaw, or heart conceived*, but yet their eyes do ſee, and their hearts do rejoice in? Have we ſuch a grief as would diſpoſſeſs our friends of heaven? Verily, whatever we pretend, this is not from real love, for that principle is not ſo injurious. SERM. XVIII.

When they were on earth, they oft wiſhed for a Releaſe from this vain life; had they had *wings as a Dove*, they had flown away ſooner, and been *at reſt*. They oft went up to mount *Piſgah*, as *Moſes*, and gave many a longing look towards the promiſed land; deſires and groans were the harbingers they ſent before their arrival; and now that they have obtain'd their wiſhes, we ought rather to congratulate than bewail them; but by no means to wiſh them back again into the eſtate that was once ſo uneaſy to them.

We have no reaſon to think that they look back in their hearts to our *Egypt*, for we our-

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ſelves find many temptations to deſire a diſcharge, and be gone; and ſhould we be ſo unkind to our delivered friends, as to wiſh them a burden, which ourſelves wou'd fain throw off?

The truth, in ſhort, is, we quite forget whither they are gone, (either through unbelief or inconſideration) and ſo, like *Jacob*, we mourn for *Joſeph* as loſt, when at the ſame time he is lord over all *Egypt*; or we think of them only with relation to ourſelves, and our own want of them, without a regard to their good, elſe it would not be ſo hard to rejoice for them: for why ſhould we lament their great deliverance? or, why ſhould we hang *our* harps on the mournful willow, when they have taken *theirs* into their hands in the joyful choir of bleſſed ſpirits?

3. This conſideration, that *they are gone to the father*, affords us another ground of joy, in that they are gone to the ſame place, where we ourſelves (if ſuch as they) are haſtening to. This is what Chriſt intimated more than once to his diſciples, *John* xiv. 3. that they ſhortly ſhould go to the *ſame place*, and *ſame Father*, to poſſeſs the *manſions* prepared for them in his great houſe: and here

it

it was, that their love might find matter of great joy. It is the ſeparation of our friends from us that grieves us; that we and they muſt divide into ſuch a diſtance, as admits no more ſweet and delightful converſes: We are ready to ſay with *Thomas*, *Let us alſo go, that we may die with him*, John xi. 16. or with *Ruth* to *Naomi*, *Where thou dieſt will I die, and there will I be buried*; Ruth i. 17. as being loth to be parted by death itſelf. Let us but have their amiable ſociety, whatever it coſt us: this our deſire is in great meaſure granted; God will indeed remove them from us, but then it is to that country and city, where we ourſelves deſign to ſettle for ever. They are gone, but 'tis to the ſame harbour, which we are bound to, and are upon our voyage for; nay, where we ourſelves have already caſt anchor by a ſtedfaſt hope, though we are not yet landed, as they are. Do we not profeſs ourſelves to be pilgrims on this earth, and that heaven is our only home? Is it not your real hope, that you ſhall one day take up your reſt in that city of God? If ſo, whither then could we wiſh our friends to be gone but where they are? Would we not have them to be there, where we may hope to find them again? We are

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leaving this world ourſelves, and if they leave it not too, how ſhould we hope to dwell together again? Were they always to have continued here, we could not have ſtaid to enjoy them long; but where they are we hope to find them again, and to enjoy them for ever. That is the place, to which God the great arbiter of our lot has adjourned our next meeting, where there are manſions (not tabernacles) enough; one for *Moſes*, one for *Elias*, and another for us, I mean for our holy friends and ourſelves too, which our common maſter has prepared.

WE have this then to comfort us, that we know whither they are gone, and the way we know to follow them; ſo that there is nothing elſe to trouble us, but only that we removed not together: and yet if we and they were in a foreign country on earth, how eaſily could we ſend them home ſome weeks before us, and be glad to hear of their ſafe arrival? It is much the ſame caſe, when they go to God before us, while we are following them; ſo that we are hoping heaven ſhall bring us together again: there we ſhall ſoon meet our dear and pious relations, like the meeting of *Joſeph* and his brethren in *Pharaoh*'s court, with

with joy and love enough; we ſhall ſurely find them ſomewhere among the multitudes coming either Eaſt or Weſt, *Luke* xiii. 29. to ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* in the kingdom of God, whither ourſelves hope to be admitted: and this ought to revive our hearts, as ſomething like it did very much affect the * heathen orator, when he cried out as one in an extaſy, *O! præclarum diem!* &c. "*Oh! glorious day indeed, when I ſhall come to that aſſembly of divine ſpirits!*" If a Pagan could with ſo lofty a rapture think and ſpeak of that bleſſed day, when he expected to meet with the ſouls of the famous heroes and wiſe philoſophers, (when yet his expectation was only ſupported by probable conjecture) how much more ſhould it elevate the heart of an aſſured Chriſtian into the warmeſt tranſport of gladneſs, to think of that day, when he ſhall meet with the patriarchs and prophets, and all the members of the church of the firſt-born, and his own endeared friends among them?

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And the rather, becauſe that laſt mentioned text ſeems to ſuppoſe a particular knowledge, who thoſe bleſſed are that we ſhall then converſe

* *Cicero.*

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verſe with, and what relations they ſtood in in this preſent world; for if *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* ſhall be then ſo diſtinctly known, why not others alſo? And if they are known to others, ſurely, it is known to themſelves, that they were grandfather, father, and ſon, who once dwelt together, as heirs of the promiſe in the ſame tabernacles on earth; no knowledge nor love ſhall be loſt, but what is imperfect and uſeleſs.

WE ſhall not perhaps carry with us any ſenſitive ideas of face or features into another world, but ſhall probably put off theſe with the body, becauſe they ſeem uſeleſs, ſince there will be no counterpart of theſe to anſwer them, by which to know our friends again in that world; no, not at the reſurrection itſelf; for their bodies will be then wonderfully transformed, not to be known by what they were formerly on earth, in their vile condition: I only ſay this is *probable*, becauſe I will not pretend to certainty in ſo dark a caſe, or to ſee into the ſhadow of death; for I know not what ſubtle vehicle, or fine clothing the ſoul may carry away from the body, according to many philoſophers both Pagan and Chriſtian; nor whether thoſe vehicles have

have organs of ſight, or be objects thereof, nor what figures they will have, nor what ideas or memory we ſhall retain of paſt objects to compare them by; but yet I ſee not what warrant that antient chriſtian writer *Irenæus* had to aſſert, * that *ſeparate ſouls carry the likeneſs and figure of their bodies, ſo that they may be ſtill known thereby in another world.* However we may juſtly hope for a knowledge of them ſome other way, by revelation, information, or mutual diſcourſe, *&c.* "*I muſt* "*profeſs from the experience of my ſoul,* (ſays "the excellent Mr. *Baxter* †) *that it is my* "*belief that I ſhall love my friends in heaven,* "*that principally kindles my love to them on* "*earth; and if I thought I ſhould never know* "*them more, and conſequently not love them* "*after death, I ſhould now love them compa-*"*ratively little, as I do other tranſitory things,* "*but now I converſe with them with delight,* "*as believing I ſhall converſe with them for* "*ever.*" No doubt but they who dwelt together here, *as heirs* of the ſame grace of life, joining their *prayers*, ſhall dwell together there, as joint *inheritors* of that life, joining their *praiſes.* Some not unfitly compare the ſaints of all ages to a fleet of mariners, all bound for

* *Con. Hær.* l. 2. c. 62. † *Converſe with God,* &c. *p.* 79.

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the ſame port, tho' ſome arrive ſooner, and ſome later; and they, who have been firſt there, welcome thoſe that come afterward with joy and great affection: And what though our friends have outſailed us? it is likely we may come in with the next fleet, and meet at home, and then our love will be ſatisfied again. Perhaps, ere it be long we may mingle our own aſhes with their beloved duſt; however that be, our ſouls hope to join in the ſame choir and work with theirs for ever, and therefore ſhould rejoice now in this hope.

TRUE indeed, we ſhall no more know them after the fleſh, in the relation they once ſtood in in this world: There ſhall be no more *marriage, nor giving in marriage*, Luke xx. 35. except it be the marriage of the *Lamb*, which they are waiting for, and for which *the Lamb's wife is making herſelf ready*, Rev. xix. 7. When not we, my brethren, not we, but Jeſus Chriſt himſelf ſhall be their glorious everlaſting bridegroom! And as the bridegroom rejoices over his bride, *ſo will he rejoice over them!* Iſa. lxii. 5. Therefore it ſhould greatly pacify us, as it did *David*, to ſay, *We ſhall go to them*; which is much

much better than their return to us: *They have departed from us for a ſeaſon, that we might receive them again for ever:* SERM. XVIII.

I MAY add, that this is the moſt effectual conſideration in the world, from whence an affectionate mourner can receive full ſatisfaction; becauſe it rather ſupports than ſuppreſſes his love to his deceaſed friend: True love, above all things, has a ſtrong principle of ſelf-preſervation; it reſiſts all things that would extinguiſh it, and abhors forgetfulneſs; no waters can quench it, it is ſtronger than death, and will ſurvive its object. Now this conſideration of ſeeing them again relieves and revives our love; it tells us, we may cheriſh and keep it ſtill, and that it ſhall have a freſh gratification in the preſence of its reſtored object; we may love on upon a juſt ground, and may anticipate the pleaſures of that eternal ſociety with our dear friends expected above. So that upon this account, in midſt of our anguiſh, we may imagine the angels addreſs to the diſciples to be (with ſome alteration) made to us, *Why gaze ye ſo, and ſtand looking after them who are aſcended? Theſe ſame perſons, who are taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ye ſee coming again.*

SERM. XVIII. Oh! that we could, like *Abraham*, by faith ſo ſee that day, tho' afar off, as to rejoice! This is the way to perpetuate our memory of them, when they return with delight on our minds, and not as a frightful torment. If there be nothing but ſadneſs and terror, it will ſoon weary us, and make us ſtudy ſome arts of oblivion, whereas we ſhall very freely repeat a grateful and welcome remembrance.

The uſeful inferences from this doctrine are as follow.

1. THIS ſhews us the excellency of Chriſtianity, or how great a bleſſing the goſpel is, which furniſhes us with ſuch an antidote, againſt theſe temptations to deep ſorrow. Indeed it is a comfortable doctrine, which brings life and immortality to light! Which tells us they are but ſleeping in Jeſus, who have died in him, and helps us to put ſo mild an interpretation on ſo grievous a calamity. What a ſoft notion of dying is this, *viz. A going to the Father*, our gracious, compaſſionate, heavenly Father! Whatever dubious glances this way we find among ſome of the ſagacious heathen writers, who confeſs they rather deſired, than were able to prove it (as *Seneca* owns,) 'tis certain, they had ſo little

little of an aſſured perſuaſion of eternal bliſs after death, prevailing among them, that the Apoſtle (in this reſpect oppoſing them to Chriſtians) ſticks not to deſcribe them thus, viz. *thoſe who have no hope*, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 13. but where they had no clear hope, Chriſtians have perfect aſſurance.

AND whereas we are apt to be concern'd for the outward tabernacle, thoſe amiable bodies that were the deſire of our eyes, and the inſtruments of converſation, whoſe very pleaſing idea makes many a welcome return to our grieved minds, and which we love to cheriſh and preſerve in a lively remembrance, the goſpel anſwers this alſo, tho' it will be but of little conſideration with wiſe men; for what are theſe lumps of clay without the animating principle more to be valued than the cómely garments of a beautiful perſon? The ſoul was the true ſubject of thoſe excellent and ſweet diſpoſitions, for which we once ſo admired them.

AND yet even this fleſh reſts in hope of a bleſſed reſurrection; the great Redeemer is the guardian of their duſt; for *this is the Father's will which ſent him, that of all which was given him he ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe*

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raiſe it up again at the laſt day, John vi. 39. Nay, he *will change their vile bodies, and will faſhion them like to his own glorious body*, Phil. iii. 21. He will one day viſit their ſepulchres with mighty power, when his ſpirit ſhall enter thoſe dry bones, and make them to live. He will bring their ſeparated ſpirits out of that ſtate of widowhood, and reunite them to the body; but not ſuch a corruptible body as we ſaw them have here. We knew them *in weakneſs* and frailty, but he will raiſe them *in power*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 43. We knew them *in diſhonour* baſe and vile; but he will raiſe them *in glory*. We knew it *a natural* or ſenſual body, but he will raiſe it *a ſpiritual:* It had not the glory of *a ſtar* here, but then it ſhall have the beauty and brightneſs *of the ſun*, *Mat.* xiii. 43. O ſweet contemplation to think how that corruptible ſhall put on incorruption, and that mortal ſo beloved ſhall put on immortality! And therefore we do not throw them away careleſly, as things never to be look'd after more; but we lay them up in the ſafe repoſitory of the grave with ſolemnity and care, as a treaſure in ſtore; *Becauſe the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God,*

God, and come forth and live; John. v. 28. and then ſome uſe will be made of theſe depoſited remains. SERM. XVIII.

AND is this the account the goſpel gives of them, who die in the Lord? Is this the caſe of our deceaſed holy friends? Then, *O death! where is thy ſting? O grave! where is thy victory?* Thanks be to God for this goſpel; that we and our friends have lived under it, and can die more eaſily for it. Oh! what a black gulph is death both to the dying and ſurviving friend, when they ſee nothing certain beyond the grave and dry bones! but to Chriſtians who ſee it ſhine beyond the clouds, there is comfort! there is hope! We part a while, but it is as they who bid good-night, only for a little interval of reſt. Thus has the goſpel aboliſhed and quite annulled death.

2. How much more may a well-prepared Chriſtian rejoice in his own death, becauſe he has a far greater concern in its advantages than his loving friends! Indeed death is ſo ſolemn a buſineſs, ſo important a criſis, the turning point of eternal happineſs, or eternal miſery, that leads to a judgment ſo accurate and ſearching, (the requiſite preparation for which

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which is ſo ſtrict, and human frailties ſo many) the doom is ſo dreadful, and the ſentence ſo deciſive and irreverſible, that no frame is more beſeeming or ſafe for poor ſinful creatures to be found in, than that of a penitent humility, and a ſerious awful anxiety about the iſſue of ſo momentous a concern.

BUT when a Chriſtian hath deliberately ſettled the grounds of his hope, and upon impartial ſearch finds the characters of an heir of glory, and the uncorrupted teſtimony of his conſcience concerning his integrity of heart and life; why ſhould he not *rejoice with his trembling*, even when he is ſtepping over the border of time into a boundleſs eternity? Sure it ſhould be a joyful thing to die and *go to the Father!* And no doubt but it would be ſo, if he were certain of that; they who are thro' humble jealouſy apt to cry, *Lord, ſpare us a little*, would then welcome death with ſpeed. As for a well prepared and aſſured Chriſtian, who knows, if he were abſent from the body, *he ſhould be preſent with the Lord*; how can he but deſire it? Why ſhould he, like others, be hanging back and craving more delay? Why ſhould he loiter, when a meſſenger from heaven calls him out

out of this *Sodom?* Rather, he ought to deſire to be diſſolved, ἀναλῦσαι, to looſe from this port, and to go with full ſails into the *haven of eternal reſt.* It is indeed a rough paſſage, in which he is ſure of the ſhipwreck of the earthly veſſel; but the ſoul ſhall land ſafe in paradiſe. It is a dark ſtep thro' the valley of death's ſhadow, but he is led through it by a ſure guide, who will ſhew him *the path of life*; Pſal. xvi. 11. why then ſhould he fear any ill? Rather let him ſay as *Zuinglius*, when he received the mortal wound, *Ecquid hoc Infortunii? What harm is this to me?* Indeed nature ſhrinks and ſhivers at the thoughts of untry'd agonies and groans, which we have ſometimes ſeen others labour under. But what tho' it coſt us a few ſighs and pangs, who would not break his way through one half-hour's pangs into everlaſting joys, to have that great ſight, *viz.* the preſence of the *God of glory?* This is enough to make the Chriſtian at once both to fight and triumph, while he bids his ſorrowful friends rejoice, becauſe *he goes to the Father.* SERM. XVIII.

BUT alas, it is aſtoniſhing to ſee how little of this holy welcome death finds amonſt Chriſtians! I doubt the moſt that the generality of

SERM. XVIII. of men, eſteemed religious, attain to, is only to be unwillingly content with heaven, when ungrateful death will no longer ſuffer them to ſtay. How few court his approaches in calm deſires! when they have ſuffer'd an unwelcome ſhipwreck, they are content indeed to land on the celeſtial ſhore, rather than periſh; but they had much rather put off the voyage. When therefore they are arreſted with ſickneſs or danger, what do we hear, but craving more delay, hanging back, and crying, *Lord ſpare me a little longer?* Where do we find the ſpirit of thoſe pilgrims, who having heaven in their eye, *embraced the promiſe* with joyful arms, and with inſatiable deſires haſtened to arrive there? They valued not their own country; ever ſince they heard of heaven, they would hear of no home on earth. Where are theſe children of *Abraham*, theſe *ſeed of* Jacob, that ſtand ſo affected towards heaven, as to rejoice in quitting their kindred and native earth at God's call? *Heb.* xi. 13, 16. And how ſhould our friends rejoice for us, in what is ſo unwelcome to ourſelves? Let us not act ſo inconſiſtently with our principles, as to extol the felicity of our departed Chriſtian friends, and yet be ſo averſe to have

their

their lot. Can we rejoice for them, and yet bemoan ourſelves under the ſame fate? Or is it ſo well for them, and can it be ill for us *to go to the Father?* Nay, our deſires ſhould be ſo much the greater, becauſe our dear Lord is gone before, and ſo many of our holy friends alſo. The departure of every amiable relation or friend to heaven is a freſh invitation to our deſires to follow, ſince it is at once to go both to *the Father*, and to *them* too, which we perhaps have more ſenſible conceptions of. Were our friends *in hell* with *Dives*, the ſcripture tells us they would have us entreated not to come to that *place of torment*; but being *in paradiſe*, no doubt, they as earneſtly wiſh us a ſhare in their joys; and ſhall not our deſires be the ſame? Let us learn then to converſe with death as a friendly thing, which, as the philoſopher ſaid of his enemy, may kill us but cannot hurt us. We know where, and to whom it ſends the good man; it makes him *abſent from the body*, but *preſent with the Lord:* an exchange, to which he ſhould be moſt willing!

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3. LET this give a check to our inordinate grief for the death of holy friends. Here is the difficulty to put this in practice in a time

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of trial: our love is uſually ſo carnal and ſenſual, that we know not how to raiſe it to ſo rational and ſpiritual an exerciſe as this. When death has unclaſped thoſe mutual embraces of our friends and us, (which nothing but death could do) our paſſions are ſoon in ſuch a tumult as *David*'s: *Oh! my ſon* Abſalom, *my ſon, my ſon* Abſalom: *would God I had died for thee, O* Abſalom *my ſon, my ſon!* 2 *Sam.* xviii. 33. It is a time when our bowels will ſound like a harp within us; when nature can frame itſelf to no voice but that of lamentation and weeping, and we refuſe to be comforted: we cannot forbear *Jacob*'s ſorrowful moan, Joſeph *is not, and* Simeon *is not, and all theſe things are againſt me!* Gen. xxxii. 36. We have much ado to reſtrain ourſelves from *David*'s paſſionate exclamation, *I am diſtreſſed for thee, my brother* Jonathan; *very pleaſant haſt thou been to me; thy love to me was wonderful, paſſing the love of women,* 2 *Sam.* i. 26. We can hardly ſuppreſs our inward wiſhes, with *Job, Oh! that it were with me as in months paſt, when my children were about me!* Job xxix. 2, 5. This then is the time when we have need to call in all the aids of our Chriſtian faith and

and hope, for calming our diſquieted minds: and ſurely theſe ſhould ſignify ſomething with Chriſtians. To what purpoſe have we the revelation of immortal life, if it be of no uſe on ſuch occaſions? Why have we *more hope* than others, if we have not *leſs ſorrow?* Make not the world believe you think ſo meanly of heaven, by mourning for thoſe who are gone thither, as tho' this world were better. Rebuke theſe unreaſonable paſſions; it is their birth-day into glory; tho' there was ſorrow when *the hour of travail came*, (when we ſaw our beloved friends in their pangs and agonies, when we ſaw pale death *changing their countenances, and ſending them away*; then we ſtood round them with ſorrow and tears, as if we ſhared in their agonies, and died with them;) yet now that they are delivered, and remember their anguiſh no more, we ſhould carry it as ſharers in their joy, and believing admirers of their felicity: Thus *David* waſhed and anointed himſelf, when it was ſaid, *The child is dead.* *Philo* the *Jew* tells us, That the great veneration which the *Hittites* expreſſed to *Abram* in that honourable ſalutation, *Thou art a mighty prince*, &c. *Gen.* xxiii. 6. was becauſe they ſaw him bear

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the death of his wife *Sarah* with more magnanimity and moderation, than was uſual among them.

PHILOSOPHY itſelf has often laid theſe ſtorms, and taught the wiſe Pagans to triumph over theſe infirmities of nature; and ſhall *Chriſtianity* be baffled with them? *Plutarch* tells us of his wife, that when tidings met him on the road that his ſon was dead, and the company with him came home, they ſaw all things ſo ſerene and eaſy, that they concluded it was a falſe report; ſo calmly and indifferently had ſhe managed herſelf. Nay, the poor barbarous *Americans* will ſing over the remains of their friends, who they believe are gone to the region of ſpirits, while they recount with joy the little inſtances of their valour: And ſhall not *we* with more reaſon rejoice over ours, while we rehearſe the evidences of their piety, and the fruits of their faith, and charity, and victory over the world? It is * *Seneca*'s ſuppoſition (and may be our firm concluſion) of a good man, *Fortaſſe quem nos periiſſe putamus, præmiſſus eſt*; He is not loſt at death, but only is ſent before.

UPON

* Epiſt. 64.

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UPON how little a buſineſs of this life do we contentedly and patiently part from our dear aſſociates for ſome weeks or months? and it ſuffices us to hear they are well, tho' abſent: And ſhall we take it ſo very ill, when they are gone (perhaps not much longer) upon ſo great a buſineſs as taking poſſeſſion of an *everlaſting kingdom?* Can we love them, and not wiſh their happineſs? Or can they be happy, and not die?

IT may be, they are taken away from *evil to come*; ſuch times may happen as ſhall make us ſay, *Bleſſed are the dead in the Lord, for they are at reſt:* When we ſhall interpret God's meaning in their removal by thoſe words, *Come my people, enter into your chambers and hide yourſelves, till the indignation be over-paſt*, Iſa. xxvi. 20. However, let there be never ſo great proſperity in view, they are gainers by the change in the beſt times; and the day *of their death*, is better than the day *of their birth*, for they have left a good name for piety and virtue, which *is better than precious ointment*, Eccl. vii. 1. or more fragrant than thoſe *beds of ſpices and perfumes*, in which perſons of eminent worth were laid at their death, or thoſe aromatick ointments,

SERM. XVIII. with which they were embalmed. 2 *Chron.* xvi. 14. To which, it is like, *Solomon* alludes, in that expreſſion, intimating that he dies with moſt honour, whoſe memory is embalm'd with the ſavory fruits of a virtuous life.

ALL this is moſt true, when we can ſay of our deceaſed friends, that *they are gone to the Father*, and this on ſolid grounds. When we have known them by divine grace powerfully biaſs'd toward God, holineſs, and heaven, as the great centre of all their deſires and aims: when we have ſeen them ſhine with the Redeemer's image in great meekneſs and humility, great inoffenſiveneſs, and tender goodneſs towards all; (for let me tell you by the way, this ſweet and quiet temper does not endear us to men only, but *to God*; *It is of great price*, ſays the Apoſtle, *in the ſight of God*, 1 *Pet.* iii. 4. ſo that when God comes to value a perſon, he makes high account of this meek and peaceable ſpirit, as being the great ornament of our profeſſion; of which the whole family and others feel the comfortable charms:) when we have found them poſſeſſed and governed with a conſcientious dread of offending God or man, (perhaps

haps in ſome inſtances too ſcrupulous) diligent alſo in the daily duties of ſecret piety and devotion, with reverence and great ſeriouſneſs: when we have ſeen them faithful in all their relative capacities, as therein ſerving the Lord, as well as men: when they have been eminently mortified to this vain world, to all the gaiety and bravery, the intereſts, divertiſements and pleaſures of this life; and that in years and circumſtances very capable of ſuch temptations; and this becauſe they rather choſe *the better part*, which ſhall never be taken away: when we have beheld their ſubmiſſive patience, and Chriſtian reſignation to God, under miſery; and after all, great humility in an abaſing ſenſe of their unworthineſs, and need of mercy; but yet ſupporting their faith with honourable thoughts of the divine goodneſs, and a ſenſe of their own ſincerity; ſo as with hope and ſtrong deſires to breathe out their departing ſouls into their Redeemer's hands; welcoming his approaches with, *Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* When we can thus deſcribe our friends, (and I know very well whom I could thus imperfectly deſcribe) why ſhould we not conclude *they are gone to the Father?* And why ſhould we not rejoice in

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all the comforts of that conſideration? How unreaſonable is our immoderate ſorrow, when all the reſt of their friends rejoice? For, as themſelves rejoice *to go to the Father*, ſo the bleſſed God their Father has welcomed them with joy to their everlaſting home: Jeſus Chriſt has preſented them as his crown and joy, without ſpot or blemiſh; holy angels and ſpirits congratulate their arrival to their ſociety, and cannot be ſuppoſed to rejoice leſs at the conſummation of their victorious warfare, than at its beginning in their converſion; and ſhall we alone be ſwallowed up in ſorrow? Rather let us comfort one another with theſe words, and aſcend after them in holy deſires to be in the ſame ſtate and place.

FOR I muſt add, that we can never receive the comfort of this argument, unleſs ourſelves be in earneſt bent towards the ſame heaven, and can truly hope to meet our friends there. All who part here, do not meet again in heaven; and though they who are departed may be happy, yet if we never ſee them again, we loſe the comfort of ſuch a thought. If we muſt be ſeparated from them by a dreadful unpaſſable gulph; if of us and our friends, us and our yoke-fellows, us and our children, it be

be found true here, that *one is to be taken, and the other left*; they admitted, and we ſhut out from heaven: this will make their death to be the beginning of an everlaſting ſeparation, never to be healed; only it may be prevented by our ſerious preparation for the ſame happy end and ſtate.

Now the account given of that ſtate, (here deſcribed by *going to the Father*) ſufficiently points out to us, what that requiſite preparation is. Since it is to dwell and converſe with God as our Father, how neceſſary is it to ſuch an end, that we here *love and ſerve him* as our Father with all filial reſpects? that we bear a lively conformity to his holy nature in our correſpondent wills and affections? that we walk and converſe with him? that we reliſh the thoughts of him? and that by frequent approaches to him in acts of holy devotion we may begin the acquaintance which heaven is to perfect? Then may we ſpeak freely of meeting them again, when ourſelves are by faith and patience *following them, who are now inheriting the promiſes.*

4. Finally, Let this excite near relations ſo to live together, as to afford this ground of conſolation to their ſurviving friends at their own

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own death. Though at preſent I may ſeem to have been ſpeaking what concerns *myſelf only*, yet it concerns *you* to hearken for the time to come, when the like caſe may be yours. How ſurely will death diſſolve all your relations, and part you and your beloved friends? The time is coming, when the now deſire of your eyes ſhall become the terror of them; when with great anguiſh of ſoul you ſhall ſee all your mutual endearing love, all your delightful and pleaſant converſes, ending in dying agonies and ghaſtly looks, and yourſelves lamenting over their expiring groans and ſtruggles. Oh! Sirs, what can comfort you then but this conſideration in my text? or, what ſhall comfort your poor relatives whom you leave behind you but this, that they hope *you are gone to the Father?* Methinks I pity them, who ſorrow without hope, who mourn for rebellious prodigals, for wicked though near relations, who they fear are loſt in the horrors of an endleſs night of darkneſs and miſery, and that the lamp of their lives, with that of their hopes, are both gone out together.

OH! that therefore none of you would by your negligent, carnal, irreligious lives, be ſuch

a terror to your friends, nor make ſuch a ſword to paſs through their ſouls! When you are ſick, they tremble and are in pain; and that for two lives at once, that of the body, and the more important life of the ſoul too. And when you ſhall die in that caſe, they will refuſe to be comforted; they'll count themſelves undone, through fear that you are ſo: Whereas did they ſee you *working out your own ſalvation*, and ſeeking God's kingdom and righteouſneſs in the firſt place; could they perceive your penitent return to God, after your long eſtrangement from him, and that you are for nothing ſo concerned, as how you may be ſaved; could they be confident of your pardon and acceptance with God in Chriſt, oh! how ſecure and eaſy would they be! When you ſhall be ſmitten with ſickneſs, they will then go comfortably, as the ſiſters of *Lazarus* did to Chriſt, ſaying, *Lord, he whom thou loveſt, is ſick*: and when you die, they can cheerfully reſign you into his ſafe hands. When it will comfort their hearts to hear you ſay, *My heart and my fleſh fail, but God is my portion for ever*: and to hear ſuch a comfortable farewel from you, as Chriſt ſent to his diſciples, *John* xx. 17. *I am going; but it*

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is

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is to my God, and to your God; to my Father, and to your Father. So mighty a difference is it to our friends, (much more to our own ſouls) in what condition we live and die.

I beſeech you therefore, to live together as the *heirs of eternal Life*; provoking one another to good works, joining your prayers, and giving mutual examples of piety; that ſo you may fit each other for heaven, and leave a teſtimony in one another's boſoms, of your ſincerity towards God, and your meetneſs for eternal glory; that ſo, whether huſbands or wives, parents or children, brethren or ſiſters, die firſt, your ſurviving friends may trace you to heaven in their refreſhing thoughts, and lodge you there. For *verily they will faint then, unleſs they can believe you are gone to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.* So that when they have laid you in the dark grave, and the curtains of the night are drawn about you, they may entertain themſelves with pleaſant hopes, that your ſouls are among the ſaints in light, wrapt up in the embraces of endleſs love and joy: that you are ſtanding with the *Lamb upon mount* Sion *above*, where all his redeemed multitudes ſhall ſhortly convene,

vene, in order to that great *marriage-day of the Lamb*; when the glorious bridegroom ſhall put on all his beautiful ornaments, and appear in his brighteſt robes, not only with his own, but with his *Father's glory*, Luk. ix. 26. and then ſhall *they alſo appear with him* in glory. When heaven ſhall empty itſelf of its bleſſed inhabitants, who ſhall all come down to be ſpectators of this great ſolemnity; ambitious to adorn the triumphs of the mighty *Jeſus*, and to augment the magnificence of his appearance. When the ſpoils of the devouring grave, ſhall be reſcu'd by that triumphant conqueror, and the dead ſtart forth at the ſound of his thundering voice, and mighty trumpet. When all nations, high and low, ſhall anſwer the ſummons to his awful tribunal, and with attentive ſilence wait to hear their final doom. When, *come ye bleſſed, and go ye curſed*, ſhall ſend all to their eternal homes: theſe to everlaſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life eternal. When death and hell, and all ſuch frightful things, ſhall be caſt into the *bottomleſs lake for ever*. Oh, moſt glorious hope! Oh, more glorious ſight! when it ſhall once be, as it ſurely ſhall. When *the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return, and*

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